

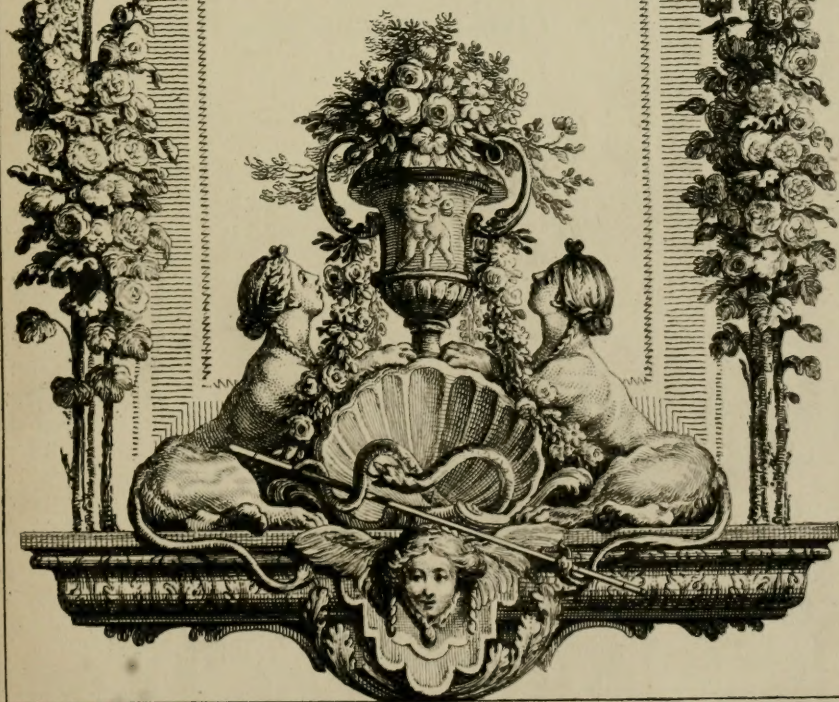






THE  
PRIVATE LIFE  
OF  
MARIE ANTOINETTE  
BY  
MADAME CAMPAN

VOLUME I







*MEMOIRS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE*  
OF  
**MARIE ANTOINETTE**

TO WHICH ARE ADDED PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS  
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE REIGNS OF LOUIS XIV, XV, XVI

BY  
JEANNE LOUISE HENRIETTE CAMPAN  
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE QUEEN



WITH MEMOIR OF MADAME CAMPAN BY  
F. BARRIÈRE. NEW EDITION REVISED BY  
F. M. GRAVES, WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
AND NOTES BY J. HOLLAND ROSE, LITT.D.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME

I

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*Marie Antoinette  
With Madame Royale and the Dauphin*



## INTRODUCTION

BY J. HOLLAND ROSE

THE reason for the exceptional popularity of Madame Campan's *Memoirs* is not far to seek. Her charm and ability gained for her a good position at the Court of France in the most momentous crisis of its history. Not only a dynasty, but a nation ; not merely a nation, but the whole structure of society, were about to undergo a fundamental change. The transformation came about in a way that appeals to the elemental feelings of human nature. It was at once the glory and the fate of the French Revolution to excite enthusiastic support, or to array in furious opposition the instincts rooted in chivalry and devotion. That sentimental Switzer, Rousseau, as with a wizard's wand, waved on the champions of the new age to the construction of a perfect scheme of government on the ruins of an outworn polity. Burke, the reincarnation of the spirit of Celtic loyalty, rallied the defenders of the old order to beat back the "ablest architects of ruin that the world had ever seen."

All that mankind holds most dear was at stake. Religion, blighted by the infidelities of its official exponents, was yielding ground before the onsets of Philosophy. The old systems of land tenure and taxation were riddled by the shot of the stripling science,

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Economics. Political inquiry was sapping the base of the Bourbon monarchy; and Frenchmen, who knew the history of their land, demanded that the Crown, which had done so much to bring together its diverse provinces, should complete the long tale of its services by making France a nation in more than name. The time had come, so they claimed, when she must attain unity in the spheres of law and administration. The barriers of class privilege and provincial privilege ought to be swept away. The three orders—Clergy, Nobles, and Commons—must merge in the nation. Let the monarch perform this task. If not, the Commons would perform it without him, or even in spite of him.

Such was the problem. Natures strong in hope welcomed a drastic change by the efforts of the people. Those in whom hope was balanced by reverence for the past desired to move forward, if at all, with extreme circumspection. The former class, nurtured in the school of Rousseau, saw in imagination the nation asserting its supremacy in every domain, working out its own destinies by infallible rules of political geometry, the King thenceforth figuring merely as its executant. The latter class, distrusting the theories of philosophers and the impulses of the crowd, discerned safety only in the experience of the past, which pointed to the monarchy, the clergy, and the nobles as the three firm supports of civil society.

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In the revolutionary era the literary champion of the progressives is Madame Roland; of the conservatives, Madame Campan. La Citoyenne Roland, a fervid disciple of Rousseau, gave so free a rein to her revolutionary enthusiasm as to demand, even amidst the early fervours of 1789, the heads of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan, while admitting the defects of the old order, looked on it as essential to the stability of the realm; but her intellectual conviction was fortified by personal devotion. She adored Marie Antoinette.

The occurrence of stirring events, enthusiastic devotion to a cause or a person, and liberty to record impressions—these are the first essentials for the production of life-like Memoirs; and the mere mention of these conditions explains why the Revolution produced a luxuriant aftermath of souvenirs. The times were of absorbing interest; the personality of leaders counted for very much; the strife of parties soon became very tangled; and men and women, rioting in the new liberty of the Press, rushed into print to justify this or that individual or faction. The writing of Memoirs is an art indigenous to France. From the days of Joinville and Comines to those of Retz and Argenson, that gifted people never lacked literary etchers. But the Revolution vivified their efforts. Me-

<sup>1</sup> See *Mémoires de Madame Roland* (ed. Perroud), vol. ii, p. 142; also her letters of December 15, 1786, 15th January and 18th November, 1787, and 21st March, 1789.



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moir-writing, which had been an art, now became a passion. It therefore figured as the romance of history for this period.

Four gifts are necessary to the equipment of a successful writer of Memoirs—a sense of humour, insight into character, keen interest in the events and movements of the time, and a vivid style. Unguided by humour, the writer wanders, ox-like, among flowers, and selects mere grass; lacking the Röntgen rays of imagination, she will create puppets, not men and women; deaf to the undertones that harmonise the discords and enliven the drone of things, she can be but an inferior kind of bagpipes. Above all, a leaden pen will dull the output of the keenest mind. Now, it cannot be said that Madame Campan's gifts were of the highest order. Her vision was correct and her judgment sensible, but she had not the imaginative force which looked into the depths of character, or the fancy which could discern its lighter shadings, still less had she the literary power which makes all her characters live. In these qualities she yields the palm to Madame Roland, whose Memoirs, for all their bias and feline spite, present a series of scenes and portraits done to the life. On the other hand, Madame Campan moved in more picturesque circles; the figures are more stately, the colours richer, than those of *la citoyenne*. At certain points, too, as at the storming of the Palace of Versailles by the ruffians of

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Paris, Madame Campan felt the throb of horror of the time; and her account of that episode possesses both the dignity of history and the fascination of romance. In truth, both in literature and art we cannot have all effects at once. The serene dignity of Reynolds and the mordant realism of Hogarth cannot meet in a single picture. Gibbon and Cobbett moved on different planes. It is fortunate that Madame Roland's intensity exercised itself on the figures of the Girondins and the tragedies of the Terror; while Madame Campan's quieter gifts found a congenial sphere in depicting the Court of Versailles, the intrigues of its *habitués*, and the deepening gloom of the life of Marie Antoinette.

Madame Campan's anecdotes of the reign of Louis XV, and those relating to Marie Leczinska, his queen, which will be found at pp. 246-306 of the second volume, were written later as a supplement. They are inferior to the chapters entitled "The Private Life of Marie Antoinette." In these the personal note is struck in the first sentence—"I was fifteen years of age when I was appointed reader to the princesses," the daughters of Louis XV. Her *début* was in the year 1767, a period which the writer proceeded very briefly to characterise. It may therefore not be out of place to describe the salient features of the situation both in the political and social life of France

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at that time. Three years were to elapse before the advent of Marie Antoinette to Versailles, as bride of the Dauphin, the future Louis XVI; and the course of his reign was largely to be determined by the burdens heedlessly heaped up by his predecessor.

The vice and extravagance of Louis XV are largely attributable to his unfortunate marriage. By a discreditable court intrigue he was betrothed in 1725 to Marie Leczinska, daughter of the dispossessed King of Poland. The match was in every way unfortunate. The bride was seven years his senior. She had been reared in comparative poverty, and her simple ways and domestic virtues could not make up for the lack of the charm and vivacity which his cold and listless nature required. Consequently, during his long reign of nearly half a century, the court was disgraced by a succession of mistresses, two of whom practically ruled France. The Queen, possessing neither personal fascination, strength of character, nor family influence, hid her resentment in comparative privacy, contenting herself at times with dealing a rebuff to the reigning favourite.

The moral and material decline of the French monarchy dates from the year 1745. That year, famous for the victory of Fontenoy and the adventure of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," is infamous for the advent to power of la Pompadour. The charming adventuress, beginning as Mademoiselle Poisson, stepped



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upward as Madame d'Étioles, and, capturing the errant fancies of the King, leaped at a bound, as *la Marquise de Pompadour*, above the heads of the most ancient nobles in France. Her beauty, wit, and varied accomplishments set at defiance the countless satires on her plebeian origin:

“*La contenance éventée,  
Le peau jaune et maltraité,  
Et chaque dent tachetée,  
Les yeux froids, et le cou long, long, long;  
Sans esprit, sans caractère,  
L'âme vile et mercenaire  
Le propos d'une commère—  
Tout est bas chez la Poisson, son, son.*”

She could laugh at the most malicious of these *Poissonades*; for she amused Louis XV. He found it highly entertaining to supervise her education and watch her capture all parts of the government. A story, true to character if not to fact, ascribes to her the final orders to the French negotiator about to make terms with England and Austria: “Go, sir, and finish quickly. The King needs peace.” In that year (1748) the ex-minister Argenson noted in his diary: “The Marquise de Pompadour sells everything, up to regiments. The master falls more and more into the easy way of letting himself be governed by this woman.”

The story of the loss of the French colonial Empire in India and Canada lies in germ in this state-

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ment. The weakening of France is to be measured not solely by the sums, amounting to 30,000,000 francs, which Louis XV flung away on the Pompadour. Far worse than the material loss was the moral loss. The habit of corruption, filtering from the top, spread through all grades of the administration. The public services, corrupt under the Regency of the Duc d'Orléans (1715-23), now suffered unheard-of degradation. In vain did the Duc de Choiseul, with equal skill and daring, seek to retrieve the fortunes of France in the midst of the Seven Years' War. He failed to turn the current of events. The genius of Frederick the Great and the elder Pitt prevailed over the ill-organised efforts of France, Austria, and Russia; and France and her new ally, Austria, had to consent to humiliating terms of peace in 1763. French vanity ascribed the disasters of the war largely to the sluggishness of the Hapsburg monarchy. In reality they were mainly due to the internal weakness of France. The latest and best historian of that war, M. Richard Waddington, concludes an exhaustive inquiry by the authoritative pronouncement, that the loss of Canada "rests entirely on the carelessness, negligence, and, to speak frankly, the imbecility of Louis and his counsellors."<sup>1</sup>

This judgment deserves to be borne in mind while reading the *Memoirs of Madame Campan*; for the

<sup>1</sup> Waddington, *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, vol. iv, p. 392.

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marriage of Marie Antoinette with the future Louis XVI was designed to strengthen the alliance which was held responsible for the late disasters. From the outset, therefore, the young Archduchess was regarded with a jealous eye by all those whose vanity or ignorance induced them to shift entirely on Austria the blame for the loss of the prestige of France. It was not only in the court circles opposed to Choiseul that gibes were uttered against *l'Autrichienne*. The taunt that she was an emissary of Maria Theresa found ready credence, all the more so because it was notorious that the Empress-Queen planned marriages for her numerous progeny with a view to the furtherance of Hapsburg designs. The Archduchess, Marie Caroline, had been married at the age of sixteen to Ferdinand IV of Naples, in order to assure Austria's interests in South Italy; and two years later, the ninth child, Marie Antoinette, was sacrificed on the marriage altar at the age of fourteen years and six months, in order to cement the Austro-French compact. Obviously, nothing but dictates of policy could have prescribed this premature affiance to a French prince who was known to be dull of wit, ungraceful in person, and a laggard in everything but hunting.

The charms of Marie Antoinette were thus vividly described by a contemporary who visited the Palace at Schönbrunn:



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“The Archduchess is of medium height, slender without being thin, and has the figure of an unformed girl. She is well made, with graceful movements. Her hair is pure blonde, without any tinge of red, and grows thickly, and is worn rolled back ; and perhaps you will think in consequence that her forehead is too high. It was a mania of her governess, who admired a high forehead, and used to make the princess wear a woollen bandage round her head, and this has broken the hair. Thus she has a high but very fine forehead, and her face is a long perfect oval. Her eyebrows are as thick as they can be with a blonde, and a shade darker than her hair, and her eyelashes are charmingly long. Her eyes are blue, but not too pale, and full of vivacity. Her nose is aquiline, a little too sharp, perhaps, but it gives an air of distinction and delicacy. Her mouth is small and red as a cherry, her lips are rather thick, especially the lower one, which is a special trait of the House of Burgundy. Do you not admire this feature, which has come direct from the Duchesse Marie-la-Grande down to our day, quite three hundred years? But that is the least portion of her rich heritage. Ah! Louis XI, Louis XI, what did you do there! The delicacy of her skin is a marvel; her complexion a lovely tint, which will be marred when covered with rouge. Her carriage is that of an archduchess and a daughter of the Cæsars. Her expression varies much, but is always noble, and

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her natural dignity is tempered by the simplicity of her education. When the people of France see her, I think they will not fail to be inspired with a sentiment of profound tenderness and respect for her.”<sup>1</sup>

The marriage of Marie Antoinette with the future Louis XVI would have seemed not infelicitous, as royal marriages went in that age, if he had possessed some slight degree of personal charm and adaptability, and if she had inherited the good sense and tact of her mother. In the main her characteristics were those of her father, that easy-going Duc de Lorraine, whom the love of Maria Theresa raised to fortune if not to fame. Marie Antoinette possessed his personal charm, his gracious manners, but also his flightiness. The Abbé de Vermond, who was sent from Paris to supervise her education at Schönbrunn, found her mind like wax, ready to receive impressions, but unable to retain them against other imprints. “I cannot accustom her [he wrote] to investigate any subject thoroughly, although I feel that she is quite capable of it.” There he put his finger on the weak spot of her nature. Sensitive, lively, and affectionate, she nevertheless lacked depth, tenacity, perseverance—in fact, all the solid and sterner virtues. Marie Antoinette was made for sunshine, not for storm; for the careless gaiety of a small German Court, not for the tedious splendours and overwhelming responsi-

<sup>1</sup> *Les Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créquy* (English edition), pp. 176, 177.

## INTRODUCTION

bilities of that of Versailles at the supreme crisis of its history.

In passing, we may note that the Abbé de Vermond seems to have done his best to cure the deficiencies of her character. His letters, which were published long after the *Memoirs of Madame Campan*, show that he found the young Archduchess very ill-educated by her former instructress, the Countess von Brandeis, and that he strove conscientiously to remedy the defects both in regard to mere instruction and to the far more important sphere of the development of character. His chief mistake seems to have been in trusting too largely to conversational methods, which naturally had no abiding effect on a nature like hers. But he certainly does not deserve the sweeping censure passed on him by Madame Campan, that cunning calculation induced him to keep the Archduchess ignorant in order to assure her dependence on him in the future. This charge (evidently the outcome of court tattle) is very superficial; for cunning of that kind would soon be perceived by the pupil and lead to the disgrace of the preceptor.

The crowning misfortune of the early life of Marie Antoinette was her marriage. Maria Theresa, Louis XV, and their leading statesmen are equally responsible for this act of inconsiderate folly, which thrust a half-educated girl into the most difficult and trying position in the world. A year before her arrival at Ver-



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sailles, that court, for all its airy tolerance of conjugal infidelities, had witnessed with dismay the rise to power of a new mistress, the Comtesse du Barry. Her plebeian origin, even more than her daring pranks in the Council Chamber which Madame Campan so vividly recounts, caused much scandal; and the first social problem of the little Dauphine was how to behave towards the reigning favourite. She succeeded remarkably well in keeping the adventuress in her place, and in not offending Louis XV. In December, 1770, there came a more serious trial. Her ally, the powerful minister, Choiseul, suffered disgrace at the hands of the King whom he had served so well. The causes of this event are not so simple as Madame Campan would have us believe. The quarrel of the Minister with the supporters of the Jesuits (the Jesuits themselves had been banished from France in 1764) was far less important than the dangerous tendency of his foreign policy. He was preparing for a war of revenge against England; and a dispute between Spain and the British Government respecting the ownership of the Falkland Islands promised to bring Spain and her ally, France, to a rupture with the Court of St. James's. But the condition of affairs in France was so serious as to give pause even to the proud Choiseul. The Treasury was empty, the quarrels with the Paris and chief provincial Parliaments were certain to break forth at the attempt to levy new

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taxes. Above all, the experience of the Seven Years' War had taught Choiseul the inefficiency of the army and navy of Spain. But her monarch, Charles III, was warlike, and declined to give up the Falkland Isles. Accordingly Choiseul, the author of the Family Compact of 1761, felt bound in honour to support his claims, until at the council meeting of December 9, 1770, Terray and other ministers attacked him so fiercely as to compel the King to choose between war and peace. The siren voice of the Du Barry pleaded successfully for peace with dishonour; and on 24th December Louis ordered Choiseul to retire to his estate at Chanteloup. The enthusiasm of his supporters invested his journey thither with the aspect of an ovation accorded to "the last remains of French honour and public liberty." "Soon he held court at Chanteloup, while Versailles remained deserted." So says the memoir-writer, Wéber, with pardonable exaggeration.<sup>1</sup>

The prestige of the French monarchy never recovered from the disgrace of Choiseul, which implied the humiliation of France and Spain before the growing power of Great Britain. This was the time which Louis XV chose for browbeating those who had opposed his authority in civil affairs. The early days of 1771 witnessed the installation in office of a new Interim Parliament which took over the functions of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Wéber*, chap. v, p. 65 (edit. Barrière).

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the factious Parliaments of Paris and of the Provinces, now deprived of their functions. This display of absolutism, together with the exile of the chief legal functionaries of France, aroused a storm of protest. The royal princes, including the King's cousin, the Duc d'Orléans, signified their disapproval, and were with difficulty restrained from a public protest. In the next year the First Partition of Poland was perpetrated by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. As France had consistently maintained Polish claims, this sinister event dealt a blow both to her prestige and to the Austro-French alliance, of which Marie Antoinette was the outward and visible sign.

The reader will now be in a position to realise the immense difficulties of the Dauphiness. Her way was beset by pitfalls. National sentiment, always strong in France, was against her. Choiseul, who might have been her counsellor, was too compromised by his former disputes with the Jesuits and his haughty attitude towards England, to commend himself to the devout and timid Louis XVI on his accession to the throne in May, 1774; and, as Madame Campan shows, the request of Marie Antoinette for his recall to office went unheeded. In this connection we may note that on 11th May, 1774, the young Queen wrote as follows to Maria Theresa: "The King [Louis XVI], who is very silent, has not uttered a word as to the choice of a ministry; he does not seem to me at all



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disposed to retain M. d'Aiguillon, *l'âme damnée* of the Comtesse du Barry, who is too favourable to Prussia. I have put forward the name of M. de Choiseul, who would be acceptable to the country; but I have had no answer. He does not seem to be in favour, and I do not know who will be appointed if it is not he. I will return to the charge at a more opportune moment. . . .”

This is one of the few proofs in the early letters of Marie Antoinette of her intervention in political affairs; and here she sustained a rebuff. A perusal of her correspondence will show that her interventions at this period were much less frequent than the tattle of courtiers asserted. In truth, how should she, either as Dauphiness or Queen, have the opportunity of interfering in affairs of *la haute politique*? The life of laborious trifling at Versailles kept her during many years in intellectual swaddling-clothes, as will appear from the following extracts from her letters:<sup>1</sup>

### TO HER MOTHER

12th July, 1770

“I rise at ten o'clock, or at nine, or at half-past nine, and, having dressed myself, say my morning prayers; then I breakfast, and afterwards I go to my aunts, where I usually find the King. This lasts until half-past ten; then at eleven I have my hair dressed. At noon the chamber is announced,

<sup>1</sup> I am aware of the doubts cast on the genuineness of several of these early letters by von Sybel, Schérer, Réclus, Geffroy, and Gaston Paris; but, in the absence of conclusive proofs, I cite even from some of the doubtful letters.

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and everyone who is not a common person can enter. I put on my rouge and wash my hands before them all; then the men retire, and the ladies remain, and I dress myself before them. There is mass at noon. If the King is at Versailles, I go with him, and my husband, and aunts to mass; if he is not there, I go alone with Monsieur le Dauphin, but always at the same hour. After mass the two of us dine in public; but that is over at half-past one, for we both eat very fast. From there I go to the apartment of Monsieur le Dauphin; or if he is busy, I return to my own. I read, I write, or I work; for I am now working a vest for the King, which does not get on very fast, but which I hope, with the grace of God, to have finished in a few years. At three o'clock I go again to my aunts, where the King also goes at that hour.

“At four the Abbé [Vermond] comes to me; at five every day a teacher of the harpsichord or of singing, and remains until six. At half-past six I almost always go to my aunts, if I do not go out to walk; I must tell you that my husband almost always goes with me to my aunts. There is play from seven to nine o'clock; but when the weather is fine, I go for a walk, and then there is no play in my apartment, but in that of my aunts. At nine o'clock we sup, and when the King is not there my aunts come to sup with us; but when the King is there we go and sup with them. We wait for the King, who usually comes at a quarter to eleven. As for me, while I wait, I throw myself on a large sofa and sleep until the arrival of the King; but when he is not there we go to bed at eleven.”

# INTRODUCTION

TO THE SAME

27th August, 1770

“ . . . My life, though I have nothing to do, is full of affairs. In nothing is it like what it was at Vienna or Schönbrunn ; here even the life of the family is a performance, and one cannot be at one's ease and take thought for one's life: but I am resolved to do all that is required. . . . I am sorry not to have the opportunity of seeing him [M. Mercy] more often ; a man so sensible and devoted, who also knows the Court so well, would be a good adviser: words that he has spoken to me have taught me much. Will my kind mother forgive me if I am beset by times of gloom that I can scarcely shake off? ”

TO HER SISTER, MARIE CHRISTINE

8th July, 1771

“ . . . Our life here is very monotonous. I have no taste for gambling; and they gamble a great deal. ”

TO HER MOTHER

7th December, 1771

“ The Court here is more dull than gay: the rules of etiquette are very wearisome; however, I am happy, and M. le Dauphin is very polite and attentive to me. ”

TO THE SAME

10th May, 1774

“ May God watch over us! the King [Louis XV] died this day about noon. . . . My God, what is to become of M. le Dauphin and me! we are terrified at reigning so young. Oh, my kind mother, do not spare your advice to your unfortunate children. ”



# INTRODUCTION

TO THE SAME

11th May, 1774

“ . . . The death of the King devolves on us a task which is all the more terrifying, because M. le Dauphin has remained entirely a stranger to politics, about which the King never used to speak to him. It was in vain that we counted on the decease, which for two days had been inevitable; the first moment was overwhelming, and neither of us could find a word to utter. Something pressed my throat as in a vise. To tell you how we have been upset would be impossible: the King [Louis XVI] has quite recovered, and from a sense of duty keeps up appearances well; but all that does not last long; and after writing letters and giving orders, he cannot help coming, from time to time, to weep with me. At times I have shivering fits from sheer alarm; and he told me just now that he felt as though he had fallen from a steeple.”

TO HER SISTER, MARIE CHRISTINE

25th January, 1775

“ . . . We are very gay here: there is dancing: there is gambling, without a thought of the wolves, with which you say you are infested in Hungary. I read nothing: I do nothing with my ten fingers; and yet I am so occupied as not to be able to call a minute my own.”

TO THE SAME

3d May, 1777

“ . . . I feel myself French to the finger-tips:<sup>1</sup> one must

<sup>1</sup> I agree with Sainte-Beuve (*Nouveaux Lundis*, vol. viii, p. 386), that this expression is suspicious. It is like what a friend would compose as a retort to the taunts against *l'Autrichienne*.

## INTRODUCTION

possess the good qualities of one's station; this nation is excellent: the criticisms and contrarities of my brother [Joseph II] have served only to strengthen me in these ideas."

### TO HER MOTHER

*27th August, 1777*

" . . . I am not, my dear mother, like you, occupied with great affairs; and yet I never have a minute to spare, so many show duties of all kinds have I to perform."

### TO THE SAME

*December, 1778*

" . . . I have not presented him [Louis XVI] with a Dauphin; but the poor little girl<sup>1</sup> who has come to me will not be the less dear to me on that account. A son would not have belonged to me: she will always be near me: she will help me to live, will console me in my difficulties; and we two shall be happy together. She is here at my side, wanting nothing more than to stretch out her little arms and smile at me."

### TO HER BROTHER, JOSEPH II

*8th December, 1780*

"Let me embrace you, my kind and very dear brother, in my despair at the news of the death of our beloved mother, our soul, our glory—so sensitive, so tender, so good, the mother of her peoples, who reproached herself for sleep as for so much time snatched from well-doing. I have been overwhelmed by it, and am very unwell. . . . I cannot part from the letter which she dictated for me shortly before

<sup>1</sup> Marie Thérèse, the future Duchesse d'Angoulême, was born on 19th December, 1778.

## INTRODUCTION

death. What kindness of heart thus to think of me at such a moment! It is calculated to make me greater and better. She recommended me to work with all my strength for the return of peace. Ah yes! I would gladly do so if I had any share in public affairs.”<sup>1</sup>

There is the real Marie Antoinette. She was not an Elizabeth of intrigue, a Pompadour of extravagance, a Du Barry of superficial ignorance, a Catharine of vice. A fairer study, a more intelligent appreciation, will show that her defects resulted partly from the excess of qualities good in themselves, but in far larger measure from the misfortunes of her upbringing. As we have seen, she lacked perseverance and persistence. Her impulses, though always kindly and generous, were not controlled by an enlightened reason or a well-balanced judgment. A glance too often decided her attachment or repugnance to a person; and these first impressions were not easily altered. At first sight she fell in love with the Princesse de Lamballe and the Duchesse de Polignac. Madame Campan does not call attention to this weakness; but other observers noted it with concern. Her resentment also was apt to be lasting. In the case of De Rohan it was justified. But what can we say of her persistent repugnance to La Fayette, except that it was one among the strands of destiny leading to her doom?

<sup>1</sup> For further proofs, see her long letters to Joseph II quoted by M. de la Rocheterie, *Life of Marie Antoinette* (Eng. edit.), vol. i, pp. 268, 269.



## INTRODUCTION

As for her love of gaiety and display, natural in a daughter of the House of Hapsburg-Lorraine, it received artificial stimulus amidst the vapid splendours of Versailles. She who needed healthful pleasures was long denied them. The future mother of the Kings of France might not ride on horseback: as Dauphiness she had to be content to parade on a well-tamed ass; and it was some time before she could indulge her delight in the poetry of motion. This was symbolical of her early experiences, all of which tended to cramp healthful development and to force nature into abnormal growths. Chief among these excrescences were her later passions for gambling and jewellery. As we have seen, she at first disliked play. But what else was there to do to while away the long dull evenings? Her evil genius, the Comte d'Artois, by degrees drew her into the habit; but not until she had been two years a queen did she play for high stakes. The Austrian ambassador, Mercy Argenteau, who sought to guide her aright, wrote to the Empress-Queen in much anxiety: "Her play has become very dear; she no longer plays games of commerce, in which the losses are necessarily limited: lansquenet has become her ordinary play, and sometimes faro." The worst incident was her playing for high stakes at the house of the Princesse de Lamballe on October 30-31, and far on into November 1, All Saints' Day. The King himself mildly remonstrated

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with her on this impropriety, but she laughed it off and he weakly acquiesced. As Madame Campan records, he disapproved of gambling, especially with the nation's money; and he should certainly have kept firmer control over his young consort. But we need not accept the spiteful statement of the Comtesse de Boigne, that the Queen and the Comte d'Artois "played so high that they were obliged to admit to their society every damaged reputation in Europe to be able to make up a game."<sup>1</sup> That a woman so clever as the countess should give currency to so far-fetched a slander may serve to warn readers of the need of caution in crediting memoir-writers, whose first aim was to startle.

The year 1776, memorable for the birth of democracy in the New World, saw monarchy compromise itself further at Versailles. Marie Antoinette now began to give free rein to that passion for jewellery which was destined to cause her poignant grief. Early in the year she bought a magnificent spray of diamonds for 400,000 francs, and in the summer bracelets for 250,000 francs. At the same time her taste for finery, as described by Madame Campan, grew apace, so that the ever watchful Mercy regretfully reported these extravagances to the Empress-Queen. The following stern rebuke came from Vienna: "A sovereign lowers herself by decking herself

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Comtesse de Boigne*, vol. i, chap. i.

## INTRODUCTION

out, and still more if she pushes it to such considerable sums, and at such times. I see but too often this spirit of dissipation: I cannot remain silent, loving you for your good, and not to flatter you." Unfortunately, Marie Antoinette did not receive this wise rebuke in the spirit of meekness, and listened rather to the promptings of the youthful circles of Versailles.

Of these there were three which drew her into their toils. The first favourite was the charming Marie Thérèse de Savoie-Carignan, whose unworthy husband, the Prince de Lamballe, had lately left her a widow. Her languid beauty, confiding nature, and warm affections, soon attracted Marie Antoinette; but before long the claims of the favourite became so exacting as to cause friction at Court, and the Queen transferred her favour to the Princesse de Guéménée, who, brilliant and aspiring herself, gathered about her a set conspicuous for wit, gaiety, and acquisitiveness. Repelled finally by this calculating *cohue*, the Queen set her affections upon the coyly attractive Comtesse de Polignac, who, as Madame Campan shows, always tempered devotion with discretion, and finally became the spokeswoman for a ring of aspirants difficult to evade and impossible to satisfy. Madame Campan's account of the artful procedure of the Polignacs is borne out by the Comte de la Marck, whose position at Court enabled him to probe many intrigues. He declared that the Queen's persistent pleading for



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the office of Grand-Postmaster for Polignac was due to the still more insistent petitions of the favourite, who, as we know from other sources, found tears very effectual when words failed. The King, who had offended the old nobility by raising Polignac to a dukedom, held out for long against this new demand, and finally made him only master of the relays, at which division of functions the set chafed in vain. On the whole, it seems, the Polignac family received 400,000 francs, to pay their debts, 800,000 for the dowry of their daughter, together with the post of Captain of the Guards for their son-in-law, the Duc de Guiche, besides many other valuable gifts.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the Queen was disgusted both by the self-seeking of that family and by the character of some of the persons whom she met at the reception of the Duchess. She ventured to hint as much, whereupon there came the surprising reply: "I think that, because your Majesty is so gracious as to come to my *salon*, that is not a reason for claiming to exclude my friends from it." The Queen narrated this episode to La Marck in 1790, adding: "I do not bear any grudge to Madame de Polignac on that account. At bottom, she is good, and she loves me; but she had been overborne by her surroundings."<sup>2</sup> It need scarcely be

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Marie Antoinette*, by M. de la Rocheterie (Eng. edit., 2 vols.), vol. i, pp. 155, 156.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondance entre le Comte de Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck*, ed. by Bacourt, Paris, 1851, vol. i, p. 58.

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added that after this pert reply the affection of Marie Antoinette for the Duchess, whose fortune she had made, rapidly cooled. Her longing for genuine affection finally centred on a plain but thoroughly good and kind-hearted lady, the Comtesse d'Ossun, niece of Choiseul. A signal proof of devotion which the Queen inspired is seen in the fact that this lady, like the first favourite, the Princesse de Lamballe, returned to the Queen's side amidst the horrors of the Revolution, and both fell victims to their loyal attachment.<sup>1</sup>

There can be little doubt that the aim of the Queen, in all her diversions, as also in that daring escapade, the sleigh-ride to Paris, was to seek relief from the wearisome monotony of Court life, and from the singular coldness of her husband. Her thoughtless extravagance in 1776 may be ascribed to this cause; and (as is explained in the notes to Chapter V) her conduct became less indiscreet when the relations between them became normal. The most serious indiscretion of the year 1776 remains to be noticed, namely, the share which she had in the overthrow of the great reforming minister, Turgot. Here again we must be on our guard against the attractive way of explaining events by referring them to the influence of one person, in this case Marie Antoinette. It is often said that she alone was responsible for his fall.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de la Baronne de Courtot*, chaps. v, vi.

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But it is well to remember that his abolition of trade guilds, his substitution of a general tax for *corvées*, and his decree instituting free trade in corn in the interior of France, aroused a storm of opposition. The Parliaments, as guardians of old customs, together with merchants, farmers, workmen, and consumers in districts where corn was scarce, joined in protesting against these measures, which, besides coming in quick succession, chanced to coincide with a period of scarcity. Therefore Turgot seemed not only a reckless innovator, but also an enemy to the régime of steady and moderate prices which he sought to assure. So great was the clamour against him as to shake the confidence of Louis in his ministerial capacity.

In truth, the King had to choose between Turgot and a prolonged conflict with the Parliaments such as had embittered the closing years of Louis XV. From this Louis shrank. His reluctance to carry through the unpopular reforms implied the fall of Turgot; and that event would have come in any case, whether the Queen had interfered or not. A merely personal affair led her to interfere. When American affairs were becoming acute, Turgot and Vergennes, the Foreign Minister, desired to recall from London the Comte de Guines (or Guignes), who had been accused of connivance in a financial scandal, and now seemed unequal to the duties required by a new and delicate diplomatic situation. But the Queen, who had

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warmly espoused his cause in the former affair, now sought to prevent his recall. This she failed to avert; but she persuaded Louis to raise him to a dukedom, and to accord to him the honours of the Louvre. Mercy even assured the Empress-Queen that Marie Antoinette in her anger sought to induce the King to send Turgot to the Bastille on the very day when Guines received the dukedom. Mercy adds these significant words, "that anger has no other motive than the steps which Turgot felt bound to take for the recall of Comte de Guines." Thus, it was personal pique against Turgot for ending the political career of Guines, and not opposition to Turgot's reforms, which led the Queen to swell the clamour against the great minister. Not long before, she had declared her approval of economies at Court, and of the administrative reforms attempted by the new ministers, Malesherbes and St. Germain. In fact, her final opposition to Turgot seems to have sprung mainly, if not solely, from girlish championship of a man whom she deemed subject to unjust treatment.<sup>1</sup>

Further, there can be no doubt that Turgot's habit of lecturing the young King precipitated his dismissal. In the year 1868 were found letters which he wrote to Louis shortly before that event—letters referred to by that untrustworthy chronicler, the Abbé

<sup>1</sup> For details of the Guines affair, see Rocheterie, *Life of Marie Antoinette*, vol. i, chap. xi.



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Soulavie, the existence of which could not be accepted on his word. The most important letter, dated 30th April, 1776, deserves to be quoted in part respecting the substitution of a time-serving minister, Amelot, in place of the reformer, Malesherbes. It refers at length to Turgot's quarrel with the chief minister, Maurepas. After blaming the King for not according the outward signs of approval which the writer had demanded, the letter proceeds as follows:

“Your Majesty said to me that you wanted more time for reflection, and that you lacked experience. You do lack experience, Sire. I am aware that at the age of two-and-twenty, and in your position, you have not the resources which the habit of living with one's equals gives to private individuals when they wish to judge men. But will your experience be greater in a week? in a month? And must you wait till that slow experience has arrived in order to adopt a resolution? I have described to you all the evils caused by the weakness of the late King. I have unfolded before you the progress of the intrigues which had by degrees made his authority contemptible. I venture to entreat you to read that letter again; then ask yourself whether you wish to run the risk of the same dangers, I will even say, greater dangers still. . . . It pains me acutely to tell you that M. de Maurepas is really guilty if he proposes to you M. Amelot, or at any rate, that his weakness would be as fatal to you

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as a premeditated crime. . . . I do not wish to shake your confidence in M. de Maurepas; he deserves it in many ways by his experience, his knowledge, his great acquaintance with business, his wonderful memory, his amiability, his sincere attachment to what is good and to your own person. But, Sire, you must surely be aware how weak-minded M. de Maurepas is, and how he is overruled by the opinions of those who see him. . . . Do not forget, Sire, that it was weakness which placed the head of Charles I on the block; it was weakness which made Charles IX cruel. . . . Really, Sire, I fail to understand you. People may have told you that I was hot-headed and chimerical; yet it seems to me that all I am telling you is not like the ravings of a madman. It even seems to me that my acts, despite the clamour and the opposition they have encountered, have had the success which I foretold; and if I am no madman, if the dangers I have shown to you have any reality about them, your Majesty cannot, without failing in your sense of duty, rush into them by condescension towards M. de Maurepas. . . .”

Granting Turgot's political sanity, we may still pronounce him guilty of social insanity. The lofty tone, amounting to intellectual priggishness, and the tactlessness of holding out before Louis XVI the case of Charles I, could scarcely be forgiven even by the most long-suffering monarch; and Louis XVI, for all

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his good-nature, was at times rough—*sauvage*, Marie Antoinette called him and his sister, the Princesse Elizabeth. How could the King, after receiving this patronising lecture, fail to take the course which Turgot dared him to take on pain of losing his head? This letter alone is quite enough to account for Turgot's dismissal, which occurred on 12th May, 1776. Those who delight in ascribing every event to some personal cause will doubtless continue to ascribe his fall to the Queen's alleged hatred of reform. Those who weigh all the facts of a far from simple case will deem her interference to be but a secondary cause of that catastrophe, the most important being the opposition of the Parliaments, of the trade-guilds, of those who believed his reforms to have aggravated the dearth, and finally, his own extraordinary tactlessness. We may conclude this part of our survey by the words in which a keen-sighted observer, La Marck, summed up the question: "I hope in recalling these facts to have as completely cleared the Queen from the reproaches brought against her of having interfered in affairs connected with the internal policy of the country, as I had previously justified her from a similar charge about foreign policy. What the Queen sought for and liked, as I have already said, was to obtain places for those who pleased her or who claimed her support. For the most part this was limited to regiments, diplomatic posts, pensions, and promotions at

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Court. Nevertheless, if the minister, to whom in such a case she applied, proved to her that by according the place to her *protégé*, he would act unjustly towards someone who had more merit and a better claim to it, she used not to insist. Therefore, if wrongs have been done in this way, it is less due to the Queen, who thought she was acting rightly in these matters, than to the servile ministers who were more ready to please the Queen by humouring her desires, than to offer arguments which would have been accepted. . . . Moreover, the chiefs of the Polignac set have very often found that the Queen resisted their pretensions; therefore they much oftener sought to cajole the Comte d'Artois, because he lent himself better to all that was asked of him.”<sup>1</sup> This was the reason for her unpopularity at Versailles, that she secured for her *protégés* too few posts, not too many. A disappointed member of the Polignac set had his revenge by coining and circulating a malicious couplet about the Queen. Such, then, was her life at Court, splendid but solitary—frivolous, if you will, but almost loveless; and her heart craved simple pleasures and disinterested love. What depths of sadness lie in her answer to someone who reproached her for her preference for foreigners at Court: “You may be right; but at least they do not ask anything from me.”

The climax of heartlessness and perfidy was

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance entre Mirabeau et La Marck*, vol. i, pp. 53, 54.



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reached in the affair of the Diamond Necklace (1785). It is impossible, within the limits of this Introduction, to unravel the complexities of this extraordinary intrigue. We cannot even venture on conjectures, how the Cardinal de Rohan came to be duped by that brazen-faced adventuress, who called herself the Comtesse de Lamotte Valois.<sup>1</sup> But it was an age of infatuation, therefore of dupery; and when she, the Becky Sharp of the time, joined hands with the arch-quack, Count Cagliostro, all things were possible as against an amorous and ambitious cardinal. Rohan it was who introduced them to one another in his palace, at a supper when Cagliostro held forth with mysterious charm—a charm whose fascination increased as his hierophantic obscurities developed. “I could remember nothing of his conversation [said Beugnot], except that the hero had spoken of heaven, the stars, the great *arcanum*, Memphis, hierophancy, transcendental chemistry, giants, immense animals, a town in the interior of Africa ten times as great as Paris, where he had correspondents, of the ignorance we were in concerning all these fine things which he had at the tips of his fingers; and that he varied his discourse with burlesque inanities addressed to Madame de Lamotte, whom he called his fawn, his gazelle, his swan.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *La Vie de Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois, ci-devant Comtesse de Lamotte*, 2 vols.; also E. Campardon, *Marie Antoinette et le Procès du Collier* (1863), with most of the evidence at the trial.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by M. Funck-Brentano, *The Diamond Necklace* (Eng. transl.), p. 111.

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In this Parisian Venus-berg were concocted parts of the scheme, which required for its accomplishment a dazzling bauble, an impecunious and very trusting Jew, namely the Court jeweller Bœhmer, a courtesan who slightly resembled Marie Antoinette, and—the Queen herself. Part of the value of Madame Campan's Memoirs lies in the proofs which they afford of the entire unconsciousness of the Queen as to the net which was being woven around her. That the contrary was generally believed both by courtiers and the populace is a sign of their malignant ingenuity in ascribing to her the worst possible motives. Her conduct during the whole affair was instinct with guilelessness. Had she been more inquisitive at one or two points, when circumstances wore a suspicious look, the plot might have been exploded earlier, and with results less compromising to her.

This was especially the case on 12th July, 1785, when Bœhmer, anxious by this time to secure prompt payment for the necklace which he believed to be in her possession, presented to her a note which had been touched up by the Cardinal, stating his satisfaction that the sale was now complete, and that the most beautiful diamonds in the world were now in the possession of her Majesty. Unfortunately, before the Queen could give an answer, a Minister came in and Bœhmer had to withdraw. The Queen afterwards expressed to Madame Campan her surprise at the

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terms of Bœhmer's letter, and asked her what she thought about it. She herself, having long before been pestered by Bœhmer to buy the necklace, looked upon the present incident as one more ruse on his part, and unfortunately burnt the letter. Madame Campan also did not exercise upon the affair the feminine gift of inquisitiveness; and the incident was almost forgotten.

Meanwhile Bœhmer and the Cardinal indulged the hope that the Queen possessed the necklace, while, in reality, it had been cut up and secretly disposed of by the Lamottes. At last, when it was clear that the Cardinal had been hoaxed, the jewellers, Bœhmer and Bassenge, who were heavy losers in the affair, feared to go to him and explain the trickery of which they and he were alike the victims. If they had done so, there are grounds for believing that a sense of shame as well as of chivalry would have led him to suppress all knowledge of the scandal. But Bœhmer hurried to Court in order to hear the truth from the lips of the Queen herself. Unable to gain an interview with her, he saw Madame Campan, who made it clear that he had been grossly swindled.

Marie Antoinette, who had been bored to death by Bœhmer's importunities,<sup>1</sup> at last consented to see him, but only, as it seems, in order to find out why he

<sup>1</sup> I think this, the explanation given by Madame Campan, is obviously true, and dissent from F. de Albini (*Marie Antoinette and the Diamond Necklace*, pp. 66, 67), that the Queen was afraid to meet Bœhmer.

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persisted in wishing to sell the necklace to her, and why the Cardinal was involved in the affair. Madame Campan does not refer to Bœhmer's interview with the Queen; but there seems to have been one, at which he spoke out plainly, declaring that there was no longer time for pretence that she had not the necklace, and that he begged for immediate pecuniary help, which alone could stave off bankruptcy.

Even then the jeweller did not go straight to the Cardinal. Madame de Lamotte with incredible boldness took this step, and succeeded in duping him for some hours longer. Finally a comparison of signatures showed him that she must at the outset have forged the signature of the Queen in order to get the purchase money out of him.<sup>1</sup> It was Cagliostro who first detected the forgery; and he now advised the Cardinal to proceed to the Court and beg pardon of the King and Queen for his astounding credulity in making use of her name in this compromising manner.

In the meantime the King and Queen, resolving to probe the matter to the bottom, sent for him to attend the Cabinet meeting. Her irritation increased as she learnt the sordid details of the affair; and the shame-faced explanations and apologies of De Rohan failed to avert a flash of the old resentment, dating from the days of his embassy at Vienna. Few hours of her life

<sup>1</sup> I cannot accept F. de Albini's explanation (*op. cit.*, p. 73), that the Cardinal never was deceived by Lamotte, but was her accomplice throughout.



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were more critical than those passed in the Royal Council before De Rohan on the Feast of the Assumption, 15th August, 1785. Some of the Ministers, foreseeing the scandal both to the Crown and the Church, desired to hush up the affair. Others sought to investigate it through and through. The King, as usual, wavered. Finally, the decision lay with the Queen. For her there had not been a moment of doubt. "The Cardinal has stolen my name like a vile and stupid forger." Such was her judgment. Consequently De Rohan was arrested. Robed for mass, he, a Prince Cardinal and Grand Almoner of France, had in disgrace to retrace his steps across the Council Chamber and the *Œil-de-Bœuf*. Courtiers rushed together, and stood on chairs to witness the unprecedented scene.

But Rohan had his revenge. The carelessness of the lieutenant on guard enabled the prisoner to send directions to have his papers burnt. Accordingly, in the ensuing trial there was insufficient documentary evidence to clear up the affair. On 12th July the Queen had burnt an important letter from the jewellers. The Rohan *dossier*, which might have thrown light on many details, was most fragmentary; and, in the absence of written proofs, scandal could romp at large. Louis committed another mistake when he allowed De Rohan to choose the method of trial, whether by the sovereign in person, or by the Paris Parliament. The accused at once chose the latter tribunal, which was

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known to be factiously disposed towards the Crown. In the course of the inquiry, the woman Lamotte displayed a bewildering power of invention, and finally fell back on a hunger-strike and a pretence of lunacy; but the public were not slow to believe her malicious statement that the Queen had made several assignations with the Cardinal in the Gardens of Versailles. On 31st May, 1786, she was condemned to a harsh and degrading punishment: but the Cardinal was acquitted of all the charges brought against him. In point of law this was correct; for it is to be observed that the letters patent which prescribed the counts on which the trial was to proceed, did not include questions as to the indiscretions of the Cardinal. The verdict therefore omitted all notice of this side of the case, which, however, was essential for the clearing of the Queen's reputation.<sup>1</sup> Here, then, lies the explanation of the malicious joy of her many enemies at this verdict, which, so far as concerned her, was exasperatingly vague. Hence, too, her passionate grief, as recorded by Madame Campan. With her usual impulsiveness, Marie Antoinette had pushed on the King to judicial proceedings against the man whom she wished to humiliate; while Louis, with characteristic indiscretion, first allowed the prisoner to choose the tribunal before which he was to

<sup>1</sup> *Despatches from Paris (1784-1790)*, edited by Mr. Oscar Browning (Royal Historical Society), p. 114.

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appear, and thereafter failed to ensure that searching and exhaustive investigation which could alone demonstrate the folly of the Cardinal and the absolute innocence of the Queen from the aspersions thrown at her by the woman Lamotte.

A study of this affair cannot fail to arouse astonishment at the skill and daring of the adventuress, at the gullibility of the Cardinal, at the extraordinary ill-fortune which hindered Marie Antoinette from probing the affair before it came to its final stage, and at the blindness of her resentment when the truth came out. The conduct of the King and Queen at the climax showed, as by a flashlight, the mental failings which the agonies of the French Revolution were destined to throw up in tragic guise. The perverse attitude of the cliques of courtiers, the skilful malignity of the Paris Parliament, and the blatant joy of the multitude at the Queen's humiliation, all helped towards the *débâcle* of 1789. Napoleon was guilty of no great exaggeration when he declared the French Revolution to have been due to the French defeat at Rossbach, the Diamond Necklace Scandal, and the annihilation of French influence in the Dutch Netherlands in the year 1787.

The shock to the prestige of the French monarchy, and its inability to help its partisans during the factious strifes in the Dutch Netherlands in the years 1786-87, exerted a profoundly sobering influence upon the

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Queen. Necessity and maternal pride compelled her to take more interest in public affairs. Hitherto the King had held her aloof from them, doubtless owing to the distrust of Austria implanted in him by his former tutor, Vauguyon, and, later on, by the ministers Maurepas and Vergennes. So late as September, 1784, during the Austro-Dutch disputes, which she sought to assuage, she confessed to her brother, Joseph II: "I will avow to you that political affairs are those on which I have the least control. . . . I know that in the political sphere I have little ascendancy over the King."<sup>1</sup> The words may be commended to the notice of persons who still believe, in spite of evidence, that the career of Marie Antoinette was one long Austrian intrigue.

The death of the great statesman, Vergennes, in February, 1787, brought to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *le très-petit Montmorin*, as the Queen called him. His embassies at Trèves and Madrid had revealed only moderate abilities; and it was clear that he could not play the great part discharged so ably and successfully by Vergennes. She therefore hoped that the Austro-French alliance would now recover its former strength; she also brought to office the Comte de Saint Priest, a supporter of that alliance.<sup>2</sup> The year 1787, therefore, witnessed a growth of the

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Marie Antoinette* (Picard, 1896), vol. ii, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 102-104.



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Queen's activity, which may fairly be ascribed to the critical state of affairs and the nullity of the ministers. Unfortunately, however, that was the time when the vigorous intervention of Prussia and England in Dutch affairs dealt a severe blow to the prestige of the House of Bourbon; and the coincidence between her activity and the declared decadence of France confirmed her unpopularity.<sup>1</sup> The Austrian alliance had been proved to be useless to France; and now, as always, Marie Antoinette had to play the part of scapegoat for the failings of the Hapsburg Power.

Such are the preliminaries of the French Revolution. Madame Campan's narrative, being a record of impressions, does not dwell upon these more important considerations; but it illustrates at several points the personal failings of the King and Queen, which counted for so much in that time of stress. Dumont, the collaborator of Mirabeau, went so far as to assert that the weakness, the vacillation, the shortsightedness of Louis were the dominant and efficient cause of the Revolution.<sup>2</sup> This is an exaggeration, natural enough in a contemporary, who sees only the personal factor in the problem and fails to discern the underlying causes which made for a sudden change. The gross injustice of the old régime, its virtual bankruptcy from the time of the American War, the ex-

<sup>1</sup> See J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, pp. 380-382.

<sup>2</sup> Dumont, *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, chap. xvii.

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citing influence of that struggle on the French people and soldiery, the factious opposition of the Parliaments to all far-reaching reforms at the time when reforms became imperiously necessary, last but not least, the disastrous effects of the drought of 1788 and of the severities of the ensuing winter—all these causes brought about a situation in which the highest powers of statesmanship, graced by tact and charm in the monarch, could alone have averted a catastrophe. Further, the leaders of French thought were too much excited by the dream of realising Rousseau's perfect polity, and too much unnerved by the sentimental gush of his novels, to appreciate the difficulty of the task before them. That gifted Switzer, Mallet du Pan, the clearest brain which looked on at the welter in Paris, noted the mad innovating zeal of the *cohue* of scribblers who thronged the restaurants, and the incapacity of the populace for cool deliberation, a defect which incapacitated it for a free government. Even the fervently democratic Madame Roland, after the frightful disillusionment of the autumn and winter of 1792-93, came to much the same calculation: "The French do not know how to deliberate: a certain lightness draws them on from one subject to another, without allowing them to proceed with order and to pursue to the end the analysis of any question: they do not know how to listen. He who speaks gives the full measure of his own ideas, which he thinks of

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developing fully, rather than of answering those of others. Their attention easily flags: the love of a laugh is aroused by a word: and a single joke upsets the whole course of an argument. The National Assembly, the Jacobins Club, even little committees have taught me these truths. This people is not serious enough to be free. If chains of flowers are provided, it will be the first to play with them.”<sup>1</sup>

Away, then, with the superficial notion that Louis XVI, or Marie Antoinette, was the sole cause of the Revolution. The “dominant and efficient cause” was the maintenance of a cramping feudalism, an effete absolutism, by Louis XV, amidst scenes of extravagance and debauchery which led the *ancien régime* to moral and material bankruptcy. In May, 1774, soon after his death, Marie Antoinette wrote to her sister, Marie Christine: “It actually rains memoranda written by great politicians who point out indispensable reforms, under pain of the fall of the monarchy.” What a responsibility for the privileged classes and the Parliaments, who admitted the need of reforms but thwarted their application! The value of Madame Campan’s *Memoirs* lies largely in her vivid portraiture of the selfishness and factiousness of that outworn society, which, while rendering the progress of reform impossible to anyone but a second Richelieu, persisted in laying the whole blame of failure

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Madame Roland* (ed. Perroud), vol. i, p. 202.

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on the King and Queen. Recent investigations have proved that in several parts of France feudal greed and seigneurial arrogance tended to increase during the years 1774-1789;<sup>1</sup> this may be ascribed to the success with which the Parliaments repelled all attacks on the prerogatives of the privileged classes.

Madame Campan's account of the early part of the Revolution is somewhat allusive; and it may be well to explain the situation, especially as she was strongly biassed against Necker, Mirabeau, and all who took the popular side. She also says little respecting the reactionary counsels of the Comte d'Artois. But they were of great moment; for they led the King virtually to withdraw the popular programme of reforms which he had commissioned Necker to issue on 27th December, 1788, and to adopt a more despotic tone in the opening speech to the States-General on the 5th of May, 1789. The tone of command jarred on the feelings of the deputies, who had hoped to hear a definite programme of reforms, including that essential preliminary, the union of the three Orders in one assembly. The award of 600 deputies to the Third Estate, or Commons (that is, as many as to the Orders of the Clergy and Nobles combined), aroused the hope that the three separate parts of the States-

<sup>1</sup> Sagnac, *La Législation civile de la Révolution française*, pp. 64-66; E. Champion, *La France d'après les Cahiers de 1789*, pp. 133-154. Aulard, *Études et Leçons* (7th Series), is less certain on this point.



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General would be fused together; for, without the union of the three Orders, of what use would be the "double representation of the Commons"? But the influence of the Comte d'Artois, and of the large majority of the nobles and titled clergy, availed to defeat this proposal, the natural sequel of the ordinance of 27th December, 1788, and to stir up the resentment which led to the outbreak of the middle of July, 1789.

How far did the Queen contribute to the change in Louis's attitude between December and May? It is impossible to decide. Rumour, loud-tongued but fallacious, ascribed to her as large a share in the change as to the Comte d'Artois; but the testimony of Madame Campan tells for the contrary view. It seems probable that the Queen's earlier sympathies with reform were dulled amidst the riots and disorders, both in Paris and the provinces, which preceded the assembly of the States-General. In all probability she looked on events solely from the personal point of view, *i.e.* as Queen anxious for the succession of the Dauphin, and as a woman indignant at the disorders and cruelties which disgraced even the earlier and better part of the Revolution. Like most of the royalists, she saw in these events little more than the machinations of the Duc d'Orléans; but in the absence of important letters by her (only eighteen are included for the year 1789 in the recent complete edition of

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MM. de la Rocheterie and de Beaucourt), her thoughts cannot be fathomed. What is certain is that the most stupid falsehoods about her were greedily swallowed by the Parisian populace. Arthur Young, who was then in Paris, reported the rumour that she had bribed Mirabeau to publish his indiscreet book on the Prussian monarchy, and that she and the Comte d'Artois held daily conferences in order to extirpate the whole of the French nation, excepting only "her party."<sup>1</sup> Lies such as these widened the gulf between her and the French nation. She, who in 1777 had declared she was French to her finger-tips, will before long write of "this vile nation."

No part of Madame Campan's *Memoirs* is of more painful interest than that which records the events of the 5th and 6th October, 1789, at Versailles. They have been very diversely explained. Royalists saw in them a demonstration of the power of the gold of the Duc d'Orléans or of the ambition of La Fayette; while "patriots" declared them to be a fitting retort to the attempts of the Court to starve Paris into surrender by the so-called *Paçte de Famine* and to carry off Louis and Marie Antoinette to the eastern frontier. Only a very brief notice of these rumours can be attempted here.

Proofs are now forthcoming that the dearness of bread in September-October, 1789, was due, not to

<sup>1</sup> A. Young, *Travels in France* (Bohn's edit.), pp. 168, 171, 179.

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political machinations, but to natural causes. As has been noticed above, the summer of 1788 was characterised by a prolonged drought; and the yield of corn was very deficient. The harvest of 1789 attained, on the whole, a good average; but, as there was no reserve of wheat from the previous year, there was certain to be a time of scarcity until the new wheat was garnered and ground into flour. Again, however, there was a time of drought, which so far lowered the level of rivers and streams that the water-mills could not work; and in several places wind-mills were built to do their work.<sup>1</sup> Efforts were made by the Government to buy corn abroad; but the harvest had been so deficient in England that Pitt refused the request of the French Government to buy in our markets; and the Irish Government also refused permission to export corn from the sister island.<sup>2</sup> By dint of a large expenditure of money the French Government and the Municipality of Paris succeeded in buying from other lands; but the supply sent up the Seine from Havre to Paris was, on one occasion at least, held up by the populace of Rouen, which, fearing a dearth in that city, detained the corn barges. Troops had to be sent from Paris to set them free and convoy them up the Seine.<sup>3</sup> This kind of incident must have happened

<sup>1</sup> *Le Mercure de France*, August 29, 1789.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, pp. 543-545.

<sup>3</sup> *Souvenirs du Général Mathieu Dumas*, vol. i, pp. 444-446.

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scores of times on the rivers and roads leading to Paris; for after the "great fear" of the previous weeks as to the advent of "brigands," every town and village prepared to hide all necessities against the winter months; and the stories of scarcity of flour everywhere led to the detention of that necessary of life. It was not Paris alone which felt the pinch. General Bouillé, commander of the large military force in and near Metz, found great difficulty in procuring bread for his men during the summer and early autumn; and he believed that fear of famine was the cause of, or the pretext for, the disorders of that time.<sup>1</sup> But it was in Paris, surrounded by large tracts of land given over to parks and forests, that the scarcity was most sharply felt. As to this, the Memoirs of the first Mayor of Paris—Bailly—afford conclusive evidence. At the close of September the city was within a measurable distance from starvation; and Bailly counted the days before the time when the flour from the new harvest would begin to arrive in sufficient quantities. On 2d October he wrote: "The harvest had finished six weeks earlier; and we were nearing the time when he could get the benefit from it." He also says that some of the foreign corn which had reached Paris tasted strange and aroused suspicions; and, later on, he confessed that the recollection of the scenes of distress and violence then prevalent around the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de M. de Bouillé* (edit. of 1801), vol. i, p. 79.



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bakers' shops always aroused a flutter of emotion as he passed them by.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore evident that the severe scarcity of the early autumn of 1789 was due to natural causes, intensified as they were by the feeling of nervous apprehension then everywhere prevalent, which led to the hoarding or detention of corn or flour. Further, the arrival of foreign supplies and the setting in of normal autumn weather must soon have ended the dearth. Marat and other demagogues were soon to write that the transference to Paris of the King, Queen, and Court cheapened bread and ended the conspiracy of the aristocrats to starve Paris into surrender; but it is now clear that the whereabouts of the King and Queen made not the slightest difference to the price of the loaf, which was determined by the prosaic facts set forth above.

The plan of carrying off the King and Queen to Compiègne or Metz was definitely considered by Bouillé and other royalists. As to this the *Memoirs* of the General and the declaration of the King's minister, Saint Priest (which will be found at p. 363, vol. ii) afford sufficient proof. Now, it is almost certain that some rumour of the hopes that the King might be carried off to Metz reached the ears of the Parisian democrats. It was the natural step for the royalists to take; and only the vacillations of the King

<sup>1</sup> Bailly, *Mémoires*, vol. iii, pp. 239 *et seq.*

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and the divisions of opinion in his ministry postponed the execution of some such project. The arrival of the Flanders regiment at Versailles and the royalist demonstration during the military banquet of October happened just at the period when hunger and suspicion were most rife at Paris. Therefore, at this point once more, a careful consideration of the events of the time serves to substitute a prosaic but natural explanation of events for the sensational stories which fasten the responsibility on the Duc d'Orléans, or La Fayette, or Mirabeau. Rumour declared that Orléans was seen in disguise leading on the market women and ruffians to attack the Queen's apartments; but in refutation of this unsupported story we may quote from the Journal of his mistress, Grace Dalrymple Elliott: "He certainly was not at Versailles on that dreadful morning; for he breakfasted with company at my house, when he was accused of being in the Queen's apartments disguised. He told us then that he heard the fish-women had gone to Versailles with some of the *faubourgs*, and that people said they were gone to bring the King to Paris. . . . He expressed himself as not approving of their bringing the King to Paris; 'that it must be a scheme of La Fayette's;' but added: 'I dare say that they will accuse me of it, as they lay every tumult to my account. I think myself this is a mad project, and like all that La Fayette does.' He stayed at my house till half-past one o'clock. I have

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no reason to suppose that he went to Versailles till late in the day, when he went to the States [General], as everybody knows.”<sup>1</sup>

From Madame Campan's narrative it is clear that the Queen and she were inclined to ascribe the shocking events of 5th and 6th October mainly to La Fayette; and royalist opinion wavered between him and Orléans. General Bouillé hazarded the conjecture that both these rivals joined to bring about that catastrophe.<sup>2</sup> The futility of all such groping about to find a scapegoat could not be better illustrated; but we have said enough to show that the storming of Versailles by the Parisian populace was the natural outcome of a time of scarcity, and suspicion, aggravated by the follies of the Court party and the acrid comments of Parisian journalists, among whom Loustallot and Gorsas were chiefly responsible for the effervescence in Paris on 4th and 5th October. Marie Antoinette, and therefore Madame Campan, took the prevalent view, which was of course the personal view of this event; but it is now clear that La Fayette was by no means dilatory in coping with the malcontents on 5th October; that his own National Guards got completely out of hand, and (as Mathieu Dumas and Gouvion have shown) came near to hanging him

<sup>1</sup> *During the Reign of Terror*, by Grace Dalrymple Elliott (English edition, 1910), pp. 48, 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires de M. de Bouillé*, vol. i, p. 82.

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in the Place de Grève. Finally, and with much reluctance, he gave the order to march on Versailles; but, though he twice administered to his men the oath of obedience to *la nation, le roi, et la loi*, he was not, even there, master of the situation. After making what he believed to be due preparations for protecting the outer posts of the palace defences, he retired about 4 A.M. for a brief rest. One of the gates, not guarded by his men but by the palace garrison, was entered by the ruffians just before dawn, and not as early as Madame Campan asserts. The responsibility for the negligent defence at that point must rest with the commander of the palace, the Duc de Luxembourg, not with La Fayette, who thereafter did all that was possible to save the royal family. Madame Campan describes the danger in moving terms, but she does not record the well-authenticated incident of La Fayette stepping forth on to the balcony of the palace, where the Queen confronted the mob. His tactful action in kneeling and kissing her hand certainly helped to pacify the rabble; but the Queen and courtiers never forgave him this act of presumption in posing as her protector, a rôle which the King surely ought to have filled.

The narrative of the minister, M. de Saint Priest, added in the Historical Illustrations by Madame Campan (p. 363, vol. ii), is of high value as showing the folly of the King in going off to hunt at Meudon,



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when it was known that Paris was in a state of uproar; and it is worthy of note that the King's absence until late in the afternoon prevented the adoption of measures for defending the bridge of Sèvres, which might have held off both the populace and the National Guards. Saint Priest evidently desired to throw on Necker and d'Estaing the responsibility for the shameful collapse of the royalist defence at Versailles; but, in truth, the King's absence until about 4 P.M., and his utter passivity when he did return, paralysed all preparations. The Queen's resolve never to leave her husband was another fatality on this day, which, more than any other, sealed the doom of the old monarchy.

It is difficult to see why the King and Queen did not escape from St. Cloud, a palace at which they resided during most of the summer of 1790. Madame Campan points out how easy it would have been at that time. Probably, the inner cause of this strange inaction was the wavering conduct of the King. In a singularly suggestive letter of 16th August, 1791, to Mercy Argenteau, the Queen dwells on this defect. "You know [she writes] the person with whom I have to do. At the time when one believes him to be convinced, a word, an argument, makes him change irrevocably: that is the reason why a thousand things are not to be undertaken."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Marie Antoinette* (Paris, Picard), vol. ii, p. 275.

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By that time the unhappy Queen had good cause to write bitterly. The time when escape would have been easy had passed irrevocably; the flight to Varennes had failed miserably; and they were prisoners. The whole affair had been incredibly mismanaged. We now know that the flight was resolved on in December, 1790, at the time when the anti-clerical policy of the Assembly led that body to impose on all its members, clerics included, the oath to obey that fatal ordinance, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The King and Queen then secretly ordered their travelling coach, the famous berline. Madame Campan did not know all the facts as to the proposed escape; and her silence as to the prominent part taken in it by Count Fersen is very remarkable. She must have known of the love which he and the Queen conceived for one another; but she chose to draw a veil over that pathetic episode. We now know that Fersen spent no small part of his fortune in preparations for the escape. Arranged firstly for the month of March, 1791, it was deferred to midsummer, with results that are well known. Madame Campan is hard on Goguelat for his share in the misadventure, and says nothing as to the folly of the Duc de Choiseul, who, because the berline was late, sent back the escorting bodies of troops. It was this action and that of his subordinates which led to the lamentable finale at Varennes.

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The publication of Fersen's Journal, and recently of M. Heidenstam's volume, "*Marie Antoinette, Fersen et Barnave*," throws new light on the efforts of the Queen to enter into friendly relations with the constitutionalists. Readers who desire to supplement Madame Campan's narrative by later sources should consult this volume, also "*The Diary and Correspondence of Count Axel Fersen*" (translated by Katharine P. Wormeley, London, 1902), "*Mirabeau*," by Louis Barthou (English translation, 1913), and, last but not least, Mr. Belloc's brilliant and scholarly work, "*Marie Antoinette*." Suffice it here to say that the latest letters that leaped to light in 1913, flung no stain on the fair name of the Queen, but rather tended to refute the calumnies of malicious scribblers like O'Meara and the Comtesse de Boigne.

At several points in the story of the darkening tragedy of the Queen's life Madame Campan betrays but a superficial knowledge of events. She knew little or nothing about the secret relations of the Court with Mirabeau. They were not revealed until the year 1851, when the "*Correspondance entre le Comte de Mirabeau et le Comte de la Marck*" was edited by M. de Bacourt. Only to a slight extent did she divine the secret correspondence of the Queen with Barnave and the brothers Lameth, which shows Marie Antoinette fighting hard for the royal cause in the winter of 1791-92, and still hoping to win. Still less could

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a lady-in-waiting fathom the intrigues whereby the Queen, and to a less extent Louis, hoped to engage the democratic government of France in a war with the Germanic Powers and assure its overthrow. But all that a comparative outsider could know Madame Campan relates with fidelity, and with far less of that desire to pose as the chief actress, which is at once the charm and the bane of French memoirs. As to her devotion to the King and Queen there can be no doubt. If devotion like hers had been common at Court before 1789, the storm of the Revolution would have beaten upon a bark more efficiently manned than that which foundered in the storm of 1792.

There is no need here to comment on Madame Campan's account of the fall of the monarchy, except at one or two points. But we may ask: Why did the Queen and she so deeply suspect England of being a leading cause of the ruin of France? It appears likely that the Queen's anti-British prejudices were instilled by Maria Theresa, who never forgave the Court of St. James's for its share in events, dating from 1742, which prevented the recovery of Silesia. Further, the policy of Joseph II in 1784, and of Leopold II in 1790-91, was strongly Anglophobe. Therefore, as every French royalist explained the Revolution on petty personal grounds, it was natural for Marie Antoinette to believe that Pitt fomented that "conspiracy" in order to exact revenge for the help



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accorded by France to the revolting American colonies. It mattered not that, by the Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1786, he had shown his good will. The suspicion remained, and it poisoned Anglo-French relations during the revolutionary era. Apart from Madame Campan's testimony, we have many references in the letters of the Queen. The Austrian ambassador, Mercy Argenteau, and the Swedish chevalier, Fersen, constantly fanned her suspicions of England, until in April, 1791, during the preparations for the flight to the eastern frontier, she wrote that the British Government must be kept in absolute ignorance, lest it should betray the plan to the Jacobins.<sup>1</sup> The King of Sweden, who, somewhat earlier, had hatched a Quixotic scheme for landing a small Swedish force in Normandy for a dash to the Tuileries, gave out that only the ill-will of England prevented the enterprise; and, as late as November, 1791, Fersen wrote to the Queen accusing Pitt and his colleagues of perpetuating the disorders of France. He repeated this charge in spite of the fact that Mr. Crawford, who had helped in the flight to Varennes, went to London in the autumn of that year and convinced himself that the King and Pitt were not only sincere in their plan of maintaining neutrality, but might even issue a declaration in favour of the French monarchy, in case all the other Powers agreed on

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Marie Antoinette* (Paris, R. Picard), vol. ii, p. 231.

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that course. In July, 1792, when matters were at a more desperate pass, Crawford prepared again to go to London to win over Pitt; but the fall of the monarchy on August 10th forestalled that plan. It is clear, however, that Pitt desired to do as much as he could with safety; but he saw more clearly than the hot-headed French royalists the extreme risk of foreign interference.<sup>1</sup>

The charges of Madame Campan, that English gold perpetuated the Revolution, were evidently based on Court tattle. The only truth in them is that English Radical Clubs during the year 1792 subscribed to provide boots and other necessities for the "soldiers of liberty."<sup>2</sup> The continental mind is never able to appreciate the difference between the efforts of individuals and the action of the Government in these islands.

The superficial life of the old régime was responsible for this curious way of regarding the French Revolution. The King, Queen, and Madame Campan alike always thought of the democrats as *les factieux*, and the Revolution as an enlarged Fronde. Mirabeau was merely a demagogue bought over. Barnave's later devotion to the Queen was to assure his pardon for earlier "errors." The German Powers were to

<sup>1</sup> *Diary and Correspondence of Count Fersen* (English edition), pp. 190, 264, 265.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War*, chap. iii.

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march to Paris and restore monarchy, whereupon the King and Queen would entreat their rescuers not to be too hard on the misguided French. It is questionable whether either Louis or Marie Antoinette possessed enough foresight to forecast their doom. Like most royalists they believed that, the worse things became, the sooner must they right themselves.<sup>1</sup> Observers often found the Queen cheerful and hopeful even in the darkest times—a queenly faculty, but one that proceeded from short-sightedness as well as natural gaiety of spirits. Lamarck found her, even after the return from Varennes, only by fits and starts taking part in public affairs. The following passages from his letters to Mercy Argenteau deserve quotation:

“So long as the Queen is not the centre of political life, seconded by a skilful Minister, and served by a faithful man in whom she has confidence, we must expect great mistakes and a thousand dangers. For, finally, we must out with it—the King is incapable of reigning; and the Queen, if well seconded, can alone make good that defect. Even that would not be enough. The Queen must recognise the necessity of handling affairs methodically and persistently. She must also make it a rule no longer to accord a half confidence to several people, but entire confidence to him whom she chooses for second in command.”

<sup>1</sup> See the *Mémoires* of Mallet du Pan (vol. i, p. 270) for some excellent remarks on this fatal policy of drift.

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And again ( 10th October, 1791 ):

“Louis XVI is incapable of reigning, owing to the apathy of his character, owing to that rare quality of resignation which he takes for courage and which renders him almost insensible to the danger of his position; and, finally, owing to that invincible dislike of brain-work which makes him turn aside all talk, all reflection, on the dangers in which his kindness has plunged himself and his kingdom. The Queen, endowed with intellect and a tried courage, nevertheless lets slip every occasion for taking the reins of government and surrounding the King with faithful persons, devoted to serve her and to save the State with her and by her.”<sup>1</sup>

That is the judgment of a statesman. It goes far deeper than the merely personal impressions of Madame Campan. But whether we skim lightly over events, or try to fathom their significance, we must echo the agonising cry which burst from the Queen at the end of her letter of 22d October, 1790, to Leopold: “*O mon Dieu! Si nous avons commis des fautes, nous les avons bien expiées.*” Yes: this queenly woman had the intellectual honesty which could frankly acknowledge defects of character; but, alas, she had not that power of concentrated and persistent effort which alone availed much at a great crisis. The de-

<sup>1</sup> Bacourt, *Correspondance de Mirabeau avec La Marck*, vol. iii, pp. 238, 248.



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fects of character and training were too deep-seated to be eradicated even amidst the French Revolution. In truth, the men and women of that age were too weak, too enervated by the frivolities of the *ancien régime*, to cope with the enormous problems which were then heedlessly piled up. Mirabeau and Madame Roland alike discerned the all-important truth that only by force of character could the Revolution be guided aright. And this force was not to appear until the day of Napoleon had fully dawned. But though Marie Antoinette lacked both foresight and real strength of mind, she possessed an indescribable charm, which has thus been alluded to by a not too friendly critic, Sainte-Beuve: "Through all the ages she will continue to interest all who, however indifferent to the political forms of the past, preserve those refined human feelings that form part of civilisation as of our nature; all who weep at the woes of Hecuba and Andromache and who, while reading of the like misfortunes and even heavier misfortunes, will feel their hearts melt in the contemplation of hers."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to feel much interest in the later and more prosperous part of Madame Campan's career. As the fashionable school-mistress of the Napoleonic period, she helped the Emperor to train the *parvenues* of his Court in good manners and in habits of timely complaisance. The education at Écouen did

<sup>1</sup> Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. iv, p. 331.

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not amount to much. But then the Emperor's notions on the training of girls were frankly Corsican. The long note which he drew up at Finckenstein, on 15th May, 1807, as to the régime of that establishment began thus:

“We must begin with religion in all its severity. Do not allow in that matter any modification. Religion is an important affair in a public school for young ladies. Whatever may be said, it is the surest guarantee for mothers and husbands. Let us train up believers and not reasoners. The weakness of women's brains, the impressionable nature of their ideas, their function in the social order, the necessity of a constant and lasting resignation, and of a kind of indulgent and easy charity—all that can be obtained only by religion, a religion both charitable and gentle. . . . I wish that Écouen should send forth not very pleasing women, but virtuous women; that their charms be those of morals and of the heart, not of the brain and for amusement. . . . After that, the pupils must be taught to cipher, to write, and the rules of grammar, that they may know how to write correctly. They must be taught a little geography and history: but on no account must they learn Latin or any foreign language. The oldest may learn a little botany, and an easy course of physics or natural history; but even all that may be subject to drawbacks. . . . But, in general, they must all be occupied during three

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parts of the day in manual work : they ought to learn to make stockings, chemises, embroidery, in fact, every kind of woman's work."<sup>1</sup>

We cannot imagine Madame Campan, who had tasted the intellectual charm of French society before 1789, ever acquiescing whole-heartedly in this imperial recipe for the manufacture of dull domesticity and unrepining virtue. But she went through with her task in the spirit with which that disillusioned nation accepted all Napoleon's behests. If she did not educate her Griseldas, she married them well. Miss Violette Montagu has fully described this part of Madame Campan's career;<sup>2</sup> and to her pages, as also to M. Barrière's Biographical Notice of Madame Campan in this volume, we refer our readers for further details. By the kindness of Mr. A. M. Broadley, we quote here the following new letter of Madame Campan to a former pupil:

*Ce 6 Août 1814*

MA CHÈRE AGLAÉ, Vous aviez encore besoin de quelques années d'étude; mais il est bien reconnu que c'est déjà beaucoup d'avoir appris à apprendre. Travaillez avec votre chère sœur, qui est plus avancée que vous, et comme elle, par votre respectueuse soumission aux volontés de vos chers parens, la preuve que vous avez vécu à Écouen.

GENET CAMPAN

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance de Napoléon*, vol. xv, pp. 225, 226.

<sup>2</sup> *The Celebrated Madame Campan*, by Violette M. Montagu (London : Eveleigh Nash, 1914).

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In conclusion, I hope it will be understood that I am not responsible for the notes of former editors, which are incorporated in this edition; also that my notes, which are indicated solely by brackets, aim merely at furnishing the most needed explanations, together with some of the many criticisms which might be passed on Madame Campan's narrative. It was not thought desirable to add long and exhaustive comments, which, moreover, always defeat their own purpose.

*Cambridge, June 30, 1916*







*Madame Campan*

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF MADAME CAMPAN

BY F. BARRIÈRE

THE private history of royal personages is a subject of general interest. Their public actions are too much disguised by formality, and restricted by ceremony, to afford any insight into their inclinations or personal character. In order to reach these elevated mortals, we must strip them of the lustre which dazzles us, and of the pomp in which they are enveloped. To such an eminence does fortune raise them, that but for the indiscretions of those who surround them, they would almost be regarded as beings of a superior race. Our curiosity is also frequently stimulated by a jealous feeling. The envy excited by the greatness of princes is allayed by the contemplation of the appetites, passions, and caprices in which they resemble the rest of mankind; the self-love which their glory offends is appeased by their weaknesses.

The “Memoirs of Marie Antoinette” will excite neither malignity nor envy. Can there yet exist a feeling adverse to her, which the recollection of her misfortunes does not disarm of its hostility? Scarcely has her brilliant appearance fixed our admiration, when her woes claim our compassion. Whilst the heart is still yielding to the fascination of her charms, it is wrung by her sorrows; her happy hours are fled before we have time to sympathise in her short-lived

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felicity. Amidst the rejoicings with which France hails her appearance, the courtly throngs who pay homage to her, the gardens in which her simple taste delights, our imagination is impressed with the fate that awaits her. From the saloons of Versailles, or the groves of Trianon, we seem to descry the towers of the Temple. Were it possible for the most rigid severity to conceive the slightest reproach against her, it would die on the lips, amidst the sighs of regret and the accents of grief.

Madame Campan's work will leave similar impressions. She had numerous enemies. At court, where favour is closely followed by envy, her success created jealousies; she was punished, at the time of the Revolution, for the kindness with which she had been honoured by the Queen. Those who never felt, as she did, the point of the sword on their bosoms, on the memorable 10th of August, reproached her with timidity; those who never threw themselves, like her, at the feet of Pétion, entreating permission to share the dangerous captivity of Marie Antoinette, have called her fidelity in question. After having calumniated her conduct, they endeavoured to raise a prejudice against the spirit in which her *Memoirs* are written, even before their appearance. These *Memoirs* are now published, and I have the gratification of witnessing the confusion of disappointed malevolence. Madame Campan has not thought proper to furnish a triumph to her enemies. A fragment of her manuscripts contains the following passage:

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“I shall relate what I have seen. I shall make known the character of Marie Antoinette, her domestic habits, the way in which she spent her time, her maternal affection, her constancy in friendship, her dignity in misfortune. I shall, in some degree, throw open her private apartments, where I have passed so many hours with her, both in the happiest and the most sorrowful years of her life.”

She afterwards adds, in another inedited passage:

“I have lived long; fortune has afforded me opportunities of seeing and forming an opinion of the celebrated women of several periods. I have been intimate with young persons, whose elegance and amiable disposition will be remembered long after they have ceased to exist; but never have I found, in any class or age, a woman of so fascinating a character as Marie Antoinette; one who, notwithstanding the dazzling splendour of royalty, retained such tenderness of heart; who, under the pressure of her own misfortunes, showed more sensibility to the woes of others. I never saw one so heroic in danger, so eloquent when occasion required, so unreservedly gay in prosperity.”

These words are sufficient to make known the character of the work, the lively interest which animates it, and the sentiments in which it originated. They almost induce me to pity the enemies of Madame Campan, whose hatred and hopes will be equally disappointed by these Memoirs, which are

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piquant without the aid of scandal, and which affect us chiefly by means of their truth.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now take a brief survey of her family, and her early years.

Jeanne Louise Henriette Genet was born at Paris, on the 6th of October, 1752. M. Genet, her father, had obtained, through his own merit and the protection of the Duc de Choiseul, the place of first clerk in the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Literature, which he had cultivated in his youth, was now the solace of his leisure hours.

Surrounded by a numerous family, he made the instruction of his children his chief recreation, and omitted nothing which was necessary to render them highly accomplished. The progress of the youthful Henriette, in the study of music, and of foreign languages, was such as to surprise the first masters; the celebrated Albanège instructed her in singing, and Goldoni taught her the Italian language. Tasso, Milton, Dante, and even Shakespeare soon became familiar to her. But her exercises were particularly directed to the acquisition of a fine style of reading. From prose to verse, from an ode to an epistle, a comedy, or a sermon, she was instructed to pass, with

<sup>1</sup> A brief explanation, relative to the ensuing Notice, appears necessary. None of the passages or anecdotes which it contains, will be found in the Memoirs. For the anecdotes, I am indebted to the recollection of the relations, friends, and pupils of Madame Campan. In the perusal of her manuscripts, correspondence, and other papers, I have collected interesting fragments, of which I have not hesitated to make use. They give a tone of truth, both to the minutest particulars and most important facts, which cannot fail to be attractive and gratifying. These fragments are the more valuable from their being entirely in Madame Campan's handwriting; they will be distinguished accordingly, whenever quoted in the following pages.

*Duc de Choiseul*







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the requisite variations of modulation and delivery. Rochon de Chabannes, Duclos, Barthe, Marmontel, and Thomas took pleasure in hearing her recite the finest scenes of Racine. Her memory and genius, at the age of fourteen, charmed them; they talked of her talents in society, and perhaps applauded them too highly. A young girl is always sure to pay dearly for the celebrity she acquires: if she is beautiful, all the women become her rivals; if she has talents, there are many of the other sex weak enough to be jealous of them.

Mademoiselle Genet was spoken of at court. Some ladies of high rank, who took an interest in the welfare of her family, obtained for her the place of reader to the princesses; and a week afterwards she left her father's house for the château of Versailles. To be at court, to wear a long train, a hoop, and perhaps even rouge—here was a change! here was joy! Her presentation, and the circumstances which preceded it, left a strong impression on her mind. "I was then fifteen," she says, in a memorandum which she did not intend for the press; "my father felt some regret at yielding me up, at so early an age, to the malignity of courtiers. The day on which I first put on my court dress, and went to embrace him in his study, tears filled his eyes, and mingled with the expression of his pleasure. I possessed some agreeable talents, in addition to the instruction which it had been his delight to bestow on me. He enumerated all my little accomplishments, to convince me of the vexations they

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would not fail to draw upon me. "The princesses," said he, "will take pleasure in exercising your talents; the great have the art of applauding gracefully, and always to excess. Be not too much elated by these compliments; rather let them put you on your guard. Every time you receive such flattering marks of approbation, the number of your enemies will increase. I am warning you, my love, of the inevitable troubles attached to the course of life on which you are entering; and I protest to you, even now, whilst you are thus transported with your good fortune, that, could I have provided for you otherwise, I would never have abandoned my dear girl to the anxieties and dangers of a court."

"This language," adds Madame Campan, who wrote these lines at St. Germain, in 1796, under the government of the Directory, "might lead one to imagine that my father had a principle of republicanism in his heart; but this would be an error. He was a royalist in his political opinions, but he knew and dreaded the abode of royalty. One may be a royalist and philosopher at the same time, just as a republican may sometimes be an intriguing, ambitious character."

Mademoiselle Genet, at fifteen, was somewhat less of a philosopher than her father was at forty. Her eyes were dazzled by the splendour which glittered at Versailles. "The Queen, Marie Leczinska, the wife of Louis XV, died," she says, "just before I was presented at court. The grand apartments hung with black, the great chairs of state raised on several steps,

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and surmounted by a canopy adorned with plumes; the caparisoned horses, the immense retinue in court mourning, the enormous shoulder-knots, embroidered with gold and silver spangles, which decorated the coats of the pages and footmen—all this magnificence had such an effect on my senses, that I could scarcely support myself when introduced to the princesses. The first day of my reading in the inner apartment of the *Princesse Victoire*, I found it impossible to pronounce more than two sentences; my heart palpitated, my voice faltered, and my sight failed. How well understood was the potent magic of the grandeur and dignity which ought to surround sovereigns! Marie Antoinette, dressed in white, with a plain straw hat, and a little switch in her hand, proceeding on foot, followed by a single servant, through the walks leading to the *Petit Trianon*, would never have thus disconcerted me; and I believe this extreme simplicity was the first and only real fault of all those with which she is reproached.”

When once her awe and confusion had subsided, *Mademoiselle Genet* was enabled to form a more accurate judgment of her situation; it was by no means attractive; the court of the princesses, far removed from the revèls and licentious pleasures to which *Louis XV* was addicted, was grave, methodical, and dull. *Madame Adelaide*, the eldest of the princesses, lived secluded in the interior of her apartments; *Madame Sophie* was haughty; *Madame Louise* a devotee. The gloomy pleasures of pride, and the exer-

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cises of scrupulous devotion, have few charms for youth. Mademoiselle Genet, however, never quitted the princess' apartments, but she attached herself most particularly to Madame Victoire. This princess had possessed beauty; her countenance bore an expression of benevolence, and her conversation was kind, free, and unaffected. Mademoiselle Genet excited in her that feeling which a woman in years, of an affectionate disposition, readily extends to young people who are growing up in her sight, and who already possess some useful talents. Whole days were passed in reading to the princess, as she sat at work in her apartment. Mademoiselle Genet often saw Louis XV there. In the circle of her intimate friends she would often relate the following anecdote:

“ One day, at the castle of Compiègne, the King came in whilst I was reading to Madame. I rose and went into another room. Alone, in an apartment from which there was no outlet, with no book but a *Masillon*, which I had been reading to the princess; happy in all the lightness and gaiety of fifteen, I amused myself by turning swiftly round with my court hoop, and suddenly kneeling down to see my rose-coloured silk petticoat swelled around me by the wind. In the midst of this grave employment enters his Majesty, followed by the princess. I attempt to rise; my feet stumble, and down I fall in the midst of my robes, puffed out by the wind. “ Daughter,” said Louis XV, laughing heartily, “ I advise you to send back to school a reader that makes cheeses.”



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There was nothing very severe in this lesson. But the railleries of Louis XV were often much more poignant, as Mademoiselle Genet had already experienced on another occasion, which, thirty years afterwards, she could not relate without an emotion of surprise and fear, which it seemed as if she had never overcome. "Louis XV," she said, "had the most imposing presence. His eyes remained fixed upon you all the time he was speaking; and, notwithstanding the beauty of his features, he inspired a sort of fear. I was very young, it is true, when he first spoke to me; you shall judge whether it was in a very gracious manner. I was fifteen. The King was going out to hunt; a numerous retinue followed him; he stopped opposite me. 'Mademoiselle Genet,' said he, 'I am assured you are very learned, and understand four or five foreign languages.' 'I know only two, sire,' I answered, trembling. 'Which are they?' 'English and Italian.' 'Do you speak them fluently?' 'Yes, sire, very fluently.' 'That is quite enough to drive a husband mad.' After this pretty compliment the King went on; the retinue saluted me, laughing; and for my part, I remained motionless with surprise and confusion for some moments on the spot where I stood."

It would, however, have been well if Louis XV had never indulged in more cutting repartees. Kings have no right to be scoffers: raillery is a warfare that requires equal arms; and one can never banter to advantage with a wit who commands twenty millions

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of men. Justice, however, demands the acknowledgment, that although this monarch was often the aggressor, he endured the smartest retorts without losing his temper. Even the unexpected familiarity of attacks of this kind might be a pungent novelty to a King, so long wearied by the burden of greatness. With an easy temper, a melancholy turn, a satirical genius, this prince, majestic in his court, irresolute in council, agreeable (it is said) at an evening party, could no longer escape from ennui without the aid of intemperance or debauchery. A woman whose youth and beauty were sullied by prostitution, astonished Versailles at this time by the disgraceful influence she had acquired. Madame du Barry was effecting the dismissal of the minister who had just negotiated the marriage of the dauphin with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette of Austria. The intrigues of the favourite, the rivalry between the Ducs de Choiseul and d'Aiguillon, the disgrace of the one and the shameful elevation of the other, occupied the last moments of the reign of Louis XV.<sup>1</sup>

The Duc de Choiseul, fickle, haughty, and violent, but agreeable, brilliant, and generous, had an active mind, great talents, and vast ideas. By means of alterations which had become necessary in the army, new establishments in the navy, new institutions and alliances, he wished to raise France from the abasement into which she had sunk through a long series of reverses. He sought the support of public opinion;

<sup>1</sup> [ For the events leading to the disgrace of Choiseul, see Introduction.]

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was a friend to parliaments, an enemy to the Jesuits, and wielded power with a light and easy hand. Resistance, provided it was open and honourable, did not exasperate him; he had faith in the docility of a nation whose government wished to render it happy at home, powerful and respectable abroad. His pride, a natural failing, became a virtue when it taught him never to stoop to flatter shameful caprices. He was beloved whilst in power; sought, I had almost said flattered, when in exile; and inspired courtiers with courage to remain faithful to the unfortunate, a virtue they had never known before.

D'Aiguillon, with much address, boldness, and perseverance, was obdurate, despotic, and tyrannical; in his command, as well as in the ministry, his authority was only evinced by his severities. He gained credit for talents, because he possessed the spirit of intrigue, and much ambition; but the division of Poland, effected, as it were, in his sight, has for ever blasted his reputation as a politician and a man. As a subtle courtier, a bad man, and an unskilful minister, he became regardless of public hatred, which, though he defied it, overwhelmed him at last.

The Duc d'Aiguillon did not understand that force is but one of the least springs of power, when power is not supported by the confidence created by extensive information, great services performed, and, above all, by striking successes. He was deceived by the example of his grandfather. Richelieu, while he oppressed the great, rendered essential services to

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France; his genius induced the nation to overlook his depotism. The abasement of Austria, the humiliation of Spain, the violent restoration of order in the State, the honours of literature, the encouragement of commerce, redeemed, in a great degree, the tyrannical acts of which he is justly accused. He imparted to the measures of government something of the loftiness of his own character. Undoubtedly he was feared, but he commanded admiration; and nothing induces the people to forgive attacks made upon their rights, except the glory which dazzles them, or the happiness they enjoy.

The Duc de Choiseul has been reproached with having abandoned the system of foreign policy conceived by Cardinal Richelieu; it seems to me that it would be more just to accuse the Duc d'Aiguillon of having endeavoured, at a later period, to follow that system without understanding it. Since the time of Louis XIII France and Austria had changed places; the one still rising, the other sinking. Under Louis XV the House of Bourbon reigned at Naples and Madrid, as well as at Versailles. The triumphs of the arms of France, or the wisdom of her treaties, had successively acquired Alsace, Franche-Comté, Flanders, and Lorraine. The magnanimous Maria Theresa had just replaced a mutilated crown on her head; the pride of the heiress of Rudolph of Hapsburg had stooped so low as to flatter the vanity of Jeanne Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, by calling her her friend. A warlike power suddenly arising close to Austria,



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excited her jealousy, and occupied her attention and her forces. The Duc de Choiseul being minister, was at liberty to direct his attention to a greater distance.

After the battle of Pultowa, Russia, long confined to the frozen regions of the north, began to be reckoned as one of the European powers. Four women, successively placed on the throne of the Czars, had completed the work of a great man. A persevering system of aggrandisement, and, what is more extraordinary, a system openly declared, was rapidly being carried into effect. Now that Russia has adopted only so much of the arts and civilisation of Europe as may increase her military power, without enervating her soldiers; now that these people, born on a barren soil, in a severe climate, have breathed the sweet, pure air of our countries, if that powerful colossus, which already presses the centre of Europe, should, with its extended arms, succeed in reaching from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, what refuge, what rampart, would remain for the independence of the threatened nations? They could find no security but in the coalition of the southern states, which is precisely the object of the Family Compact, prudently conceived, and effected with address by the Duc de Choiseul, which strengthened the alliance with Austria.<sup>1</sup> Instead, therefore, of accusing the shallowness of the minister, it appears to me that it would now be more

<sup>1</sup> [This is only partly correct. Choiseul, in 1761, only revived the Family Compact between the French and Spanish branches of the House of Bourbon. That compact, first framed in 1733, had been renewed in 1743, but lapsed in 1748, at the time of the unsatisfactory Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.]

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just to do honour to his foresight. Nevertheless, the alliance with Austria was then the customary pretext for the attacks directed against him.

I would willingly have avoided these details, had not the rivalry of the two ministers been intimately connected with the history of the times respecting which Madame Campan is about to speak. The Duc de Choiseul had the parliaments, the philosophers, and public opinion on his side. On that of the Duc d'Aiguillon were the devotees and Madame du Barry. The two factions disputed the last wishes of the dying Louis XV; they disturbed the first years of Louis XVI; and the fatal influence which the anti-Austrian party exercised over the fate of the youthful Marie Antoinette will presently appear.

The idea of uniting the daughter of Maria Theresa with the grandson of Louis XV had been conceived by the Duc de Choiseul before his disgrace. By this marriage he cemented the alliance of the two states, and thought he was securing for himself the favour of a new reign. Thus was explained the sense of that distich—"Bella gerant alii, tu Felix Austria, nube"—according to which Austria was to expect more from marriage than from war or treaties.<sup>1</sup>

The youth, beauty, and disposition of the princess

<sup>1</sup> I do not believe that the Turks are remarkable for saying good things; but they are, perhaps, better informed than is generally imagined, as to the interests of the Christian powers, and the views, means, and resources of their cabinets. It is said, that the Grand Signor, on receiving the decree of the Convention which ordained the abolition of royalty in France, could not help saying, "At least the Republic will not marry an Archduchess." This saying is rather too French to be Turkish; but it is smart, which is quite enough to make people quote it.

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were everywhere the subjects of conversation. Who, that had seen her quit her family to take a place on the first steps of the most splendid throne in Europe, would have ventured to form the slightest doubt of her future happiness? Maria Theresa, happy, though afflicted, had no other uneasiness on her dear daughter's account, than that which arose from their separation; and yet prophetic voices seemed already to threaten the future evils which awaited her.

Madame Campan often related an anecdote which she had heard from the governor of the children of Prince Kaunitz. There was at that time at Vienna, a doctor named Gassner, who had fled thither to seek an asylum against the persecutions of his sovereign, one of the ecclesiastical electors. Gassner, gifted with an extraordinary warmth of imagination, imagined that he received inspirations. The Empress protected him; saw him occasionally; rallied him on his visions, and, nevertheless, heard them with a sort of interest. "Tell me," said she to him, one day, "whether my Antoinette will be happy." Gassner turned pale, and remained silent. Being still pressed by the Empress, and wishing to give a general kind of expression to the idea with which he seemed deeply occupied, "Madame," he replied, "there are crosses for all shoulders."<sup>1</sup>

These words were sufficient to make an impres-

<sup>1</sup> Jean Joseph Gassner, born at Bratz, on the frontiers of Tyrol, was a celebrated pretender to miraculous powers, and actually believed himself endowed with the faculty of curing a multitude of disorders, by the mere imposition of his hands.

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sion on the imagination of the Germans. Traditions preserved in their country, and repeated to them in infancy; a mind directed towards research, and to a belief in all that is vague and mysterious; a natural inclination to melancholy, seemed to prepare them for receiving more vividly these awful impressions and secret warnings. Marie Antoinette, as will be seen in these Memoirs, was far from being able to repel and overcome the emotions of involuntary terror. Goethe, her countryman, the celebrated author of *Werther*, abandoned himself, more than anyone, to the influence of these presentiments, which it is often difficult for reason to triumph over. An unfavourable omen had occurred to him on the young princess's arrival in France.

Goethe, who was then young, was completing his studies at Strasburg. In an isle in the middle of the Rhine, a pavilion had been erected, intended to receive Marie Antoinette and her suite. "I was admitted into it," says Goethe, in his Memoirs. "On my entrance I was struck with the subject depicted in the tapestry with which the principal pavilion was hung, in which were seen Jason, Creusa, and Medea—that is to say, a representation of the most fatal union commemorated in history. On the left of the throne, the bride, surrounded by friends and distracted attendants, was struggling with a dreadful death. Jason, on the other side, was starting back, struck with horror at the sight of his murdered children; and the Fury was soaring into the air, in her chariot drawn



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by dragons.”<sup>1</sup> Superstition apart, this strange coincidence was really striking. The husband, the bride, and the children were victims in both cases; the fatal omen seemed accomplished in every point. Maria Theresa might have repeated the fine verses which the father of Creusa addresses to his expiring daughter, in the *Medea* of Corneille:

*“ This, then, my child, the hymeneal day,  
The royal union anxiously expected!  
Stern fate extinguishes the bridal torch,  
And for thy marriage-bed, the tomb awaits thee.”*

But if we seek fatal omens, those which attended the marriage festivities at Paris may well suffice. The occurrences at the Place Louis XV are generally known, and it is unnecessary to state how the conflagration of the scaffolds intended for the fire-works, the magistrates’ want of foresight, the avidity of robbers, the murderous career of the coaches, brought on and aggravated the disasters of that day; or how the young dauphiness, coming from Versailles by the Cours la Reine, elated with joy, brilliantly decorated, and eager to witness the rejoicings of the whole people, fled, struck with consternation and drowned in tears, whilst the dreadful scene and the cries of the dying pursued her distracted imagination.

Having been led to notice this calamitous event, I will briefly notice one of the scenes it presented. Amidst this distracted multitude, pressed on every

<sup>1</sup> *Mein Leben*, by Goethe (published at Tübingen, by Cotta).

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side, trampled under the horses' feet, precipitated into the ditches of the Rue Royale and the Square, was a young man with a girl with whom he was in love. She was beautiful; their attachment had lasted several years; pecuniary causes had delayed their union; but the following day they were to be married. For a long time the lover, protecting his mistress, keeping her behind him, covering her with his own person, sustained her strength and courage. But the tumult, the cries, the terror, and peril every moment increased. "I am sinking," she said, "my strength fails—I can go no farther." "There is yet a way," cried the lover, in despair; "get on my shoulders." He feels that his advice has been followed, and the hope of saving her whom he loves redoubles his ardour and strength. He resists the most violent concussions: with his arms firmly extended before his breast, he with difficulty forces his way through the crowd; at length he clears it. Arrived at one of the extremities of the place, having set down his precious burden, faltering, exhausted, fatigued to death, but intoxicated with joy, he turns round: it was a different person! Another, more active, had taken advantage of his recommendation; his beloved was no more!

The sensibility and benevolence of Marie Antoinette mitigated calamities which she had not power to remedy. Madame Campan, from that time, was placed sufficiently near her to estimate all the emotions of her generous heart. The marriage of the dauphin had been celebrated in the month of May, 1770.

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None of the princes, his brothers, were yet married; the dauphiness had, at first, no intimate society but that of the princesses. Of these the most affable was Madame Victoire; and it was to her that Marie Antoinette paid her most frequent visits. There she almost always met Mademoiselle Genet, whose talents and age, similar to her own, attracted her notice. Mademoiselle Genet often accompanied her on the harp or piano, when she amused herself with singing the airs of Grétry. The dauphiness was also frequently present at the readings which took place at the princess's; she already appreciated the unction of the *petit-carême*, and the brilliant imagination of a poet, who afterwards mourned her misfortunes in affecting verses.

At court, where favour leads to fortune, the regard with which the princesses and the dauphiness honoured Mademoiselle Genet was soon observed. Her establishment was talked of, and she soon afterwards married M. Campan, whose father was secretary of the Queen's closet.<sup>1</sup> Louis XV bestowed on

<sup>1</sup> The family of Campan, originally from the valley of Campan, in Berne, had adopted the name of that place as their own surname. Their true name was Berthollet. The celebrated chemist, whom the sciences lost in the year 1822, was related to this family. I find in the manuscripts before me a trait highly honourable to his character.

"On the side of the Berthollets," said Madame Campan to her son, in a paper intended for his information, "one of the most distinguished members of the institute must be of the same family; but from a sense of dignity, and a repugnance for those who frequented the court, and were in favour, he said to several persons at Paris, in 1788, that he was related to a Berthollet Campan, who had a place about the Queen, at Versailles, but that he felt no inclination to go and explain his relationship to that gentleman, feeling apprehensive of passing for a worshipper of influence and fortune. My advice," adds Madame Campan, "would have been to wait upon a man who evinced a char-

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her a pension of 5000 livres, and the dauphiness secured her a place as *femme de chambre*, allowing her at the same time, to continue her duties as reader to the princesses.

It is here that Madame Campan's Memoirs may truly be said to begin; the first chapter, descriptive of the court of Louis XV, being only a lively introduction. During a period of twenty years, from the marriage festivities to the attack of the 10th of August, Madame Campan never quitted Marie Antoinette. On the Queen's side all was goodness and unreserved confidence; it will be seen whether Madame Campan did not return the favour of her patroness by gratitude, faith, and devotion, proof against all calamity, and superior to all danger. In speaking of Marie Antoinette, she has depicted the hatred of her enemies, the avidity of her flatterers, and the disinterestedness of the real friends whom she possessed, although seated on the throne. But, as she generally confines herself to the domestic circle in which Marie Antoinette delighted, it is indispensably necessary to take a survey of the spirit of that period, and particularly the manners of society.

I shall not recall the scandalous years of the Regency, a period when the court, escaping from the constraint of a long course of hypocrisy, combined the excesses of debauchery with sarcasms of the most audacious impiety. But it is necessary to notice par-

acter so different from that which is usually met with in persons in the situation to which fate had destined us."



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ticularly the reign of Louis XV ; because, during that reign, corruption presented two distinct periods. Of the first of these, Richelieu was the model and the hero. To love without pleasure ; to yield without resistance ; to part without regret ; to call duty a weakness, honour a prejudice, delicacy affectation—such were the manners of the times ; seduction had its code, and immorality was reduced to principles. Even these rapid successes soon tired those who obtained them ; perhaps because the facility with which triumphs were gained diminished their value. Courtiers and rich financiers maintained, at enormous expense, beauties with whom they were not expected even to be acquainted ; vice became a mere luxury of vanity ; and the condition of a courtesan led rapidly to fortune—I had almost said to honour.

In the years preceding the accession of Louis XVI to the throne, and those immediately following, society presented a new spectacle. Manners were not improved, but altered. By a strange abuse, apologies were found for depravity in the philosophical ideas which daily grew more fashionable. The new partisans of these principles promulgated such noble maxims, thought and discoursed so well, that they were not obliged to act with propriety. Men might be inconstant husbands, and women faithless wives, so that they spoke with respect, with enthusiasm, of the sacred duties of marriage. The love of virtue and of mankind was sufficient without practical morality. Women, surrounded by their lovers, discussed the

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means of regenerating social order. There was not a philosopher admitted into one of the fashionable circles who did not modestly liken himself to Socrates with Aspasia; and Diderot, the daring author of *Philosophical Thoughts*,<sup>1</sup> the licentious writer of "*Bijoux Indiscrets*," though he aspired to the glory of Plato, did not blush to imitate Petronius.

Let it not, however, be supposed that it is my intention to censure the philosophers; if their conduct was irregular, most of their doctrines were pure; and from their writings they have passed into our morals. If the ties of kindred have been drawn closer; if we are better husbands, fathers, and citizens; if vice is despised; if young people, intent on serious studies, reject disdainfully the licentious works which the libertinism of their fathers encouraged, we owe these advantages to a new order of things. In morality, as well as in politics, legislation, and finances, the philosophers have led the way to useful reforms. Their writings, ill understood at that period, but read with avidity, gave them a great influence over public opinion. The court, long accustomed to the influence which wit, polished manners, and the habit of filling great offices secured to it, was astonished to see this new power springing up by its side. Instead of opposing, it flattered this competitor. Enthusiasm gained on every mind; it was at the tables and in the drawing-rooms of the first nobles that the distinctions of rank were boldly treated as prejudices. These prin-

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées Philosophiques*.

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ciples of equality often found partisans amongst the nobility, who were the more zealous in defending them, because this conduct was a proof of their generosity. It became almost an acknowledged truth, that merit was superior to birth; and it is fair to add, that there was amongst the nobility at that time, as there is now, a great number of men who were uninterested in protesting against this new doctrine.

Thus, whilst the middle classes were rising, proud of their knowledge, their talents, their attainments, the higher ranks seemed to meet them half-way, through sentiments of curiosity and benevolence: the court was still a slave to the laws of etiquette, whilst the distinctions of rank were banished from social life. Hence, in my opinion, an accusation which inconsiderate vanity has often repeated against Marie Antoinette falls to the ground of itself. When she appeared at Versailles, she found everyone inclined to a change which the state of manners rendered inevitable; and her beauty, wit, grace, and majestic carriage gave her so many real advantages, as entitled her to despise the childish importance of etiquette.

After all, what is etiquette? Nothing but a symbol of the involuntary respect which mankind pays to courage, genius, glory, and virtue. True politeness disdains ceremony; and true greatness may dispense with it. The noble familiarity of Henri IV was applauded: he had, however, performed great actions enough, to allow of affability and plainness in his manners. The memory of his achievements dignified him

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still more than his rank; in seeing the King, men recollected the knight; by his side still hung the sword he had worn at Courtras; and the French unan-  
imously acknowledged the generous hand that had fed Paris in its rebellion. The illusions of etiquette were necessary to Louis XV; Louis XIV might have dispensed with them; his throne, resplendent with the triumphs of arms, literature, and the fine arts, was glorious enough without them. But he was ambitious to be more than a great King: and this demigod, reduced by misfortunes and infirmities to his original place in the frail ranks of human life, endeavoured to conceal the ravages of disease, calamity, and age, under the vain pomp of ceremony. Princes may be excused for being the regulators of etiquette, since they are its principal slaves.

From the cradle to the tomb, in sickness and in health, at table, at council, in the chase, in the army, in the midst of their court, in their private apartments, princes in France were governed by ceremonial rules. The injudicious laws of etiquette pursued them, even to the mysteries of the nuptial bed. Judge how impatiently a young princess, lively, affectionate, and free, bred in the simplicity of the German courts, must have endured the tyrannical customs which, never suffering her for a single instant to be a wife, mother, or friend, reduced her to the dignified ennui of being always a Queen. The respectable lady who was placed near her as a vigilant minister of the laws of etiquette, instead of alleviating their weight, ren-



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dered their yoke intolerable to her. The evil was not, however, so serious, when it only affected the attendants; because in these cases, the Queen used merely to laugh at it. Let Madame Campan herself relate an anecdote on this subject, in which she was concerned.

“Madame de Noailles,” she says, in a manuscript fragment, “abounded in virtues; I cannot pretend to deny it. Her piety, charity, and irreproachable morals rendered her worthy of praise; but etiquette was to her a sort of atmosphere: at the slightest derangement of the consecrated order, one would have thought she would have been stifled, and that the principles of life would forsake her frame.

“One day, I unintentionally threw this poor lady into a terrible agony; the Queen was receiving, I know not whom—some persons just presented, I believe; the lady of honour, the Queen’s tirewoman, and the ladies of the bed-chamber were behind the Queen. I was near the throne, with the two women on duty. All was right; at least I thought so. Suddenly, I perceived the eyes of Madame de Noailles fixed on mine. She made a sign with her head, and then raised her eyebrows to the top of her forehead, lowered them, raised them again, then began to make little signs with her hand. From all this pantomime, I could easily perceive that something was not as it should be; and as I looked about on all sides to find out what it was, the agitation of the countess kept increasing. The Queen, who perceived all this, looked at me with a smile; I found means to approach her Majesty, who said to

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me in a whisper, 'Let down your lappets, or the countess will expire.' All this bustle arose from two unlucky pins, which fastened up my lappets, whilst the etiquette of costume said, 'Lappets hanging down.'"

Nevertheless, this contempt of the solemn vanities of etiquette became the pretext for the first reproaches levelled at the Queen. In fact, what misconduct might not be dreaded from a princess who could absolutely go out without a hoop! and who, in the saloons of Trianon, instead of discussing the important rights to chairs and stools, good-naturedly invited everybody to be seated.<sup>1</sup> The anti-Austrian party, ever discontented and vindictive, became spies upon her conduct, exaggerated her slightest errors, and calumniated her most innocent proceedings. "What seems unaccountable at the first glance," says Montjoie, whose opinions must certainly be considered genuine, "and

<sup>1</sup> Even for the suppression of the most ridiculous customs, the Queen was never forgiven. The respectable dowagers, who had passed their innocent youth in the court of Louis XV, and even under the Regency, considered the abolition of the hoop as a violation of morals. Madame Campan herself says, in some part of her *Memoirs*, almost with regret, that the great ruffs and fardingales worn in the court of the last of the Valois were not adopted without a motive; that those appendages, indifferent in appearance, actually had the effect of banishing every idea of gallantry.

Although such a precaution may appear, at least, a little singular, in the dissolute court of Henri III, I shall not pretend to deny the efficacy of the fardingale; I will only add a little anecdote quoted by Laplace.

"M. de Fresne Forget, being one day in company with the Queen Marguerite, told her he was astonished how men and women with such great ruffs could eat soup without spoiling them; and still more, how the ladies could be gallant, with their great fardingales. The Queen made no answer at that time, but a few days after, having a very large ruff on, and some *bouilli* to eat, she ordered a very long spoon to be brought, and ate her *bouilli* with it, without soiling her ruff. Upon which, addressing herself to M. de Fresne, she said, laughing, 'There now, you see, with a little ingenuity one may manage anything.' 'Yes, faith, madam,' said the good man, 'as far as regards the soup, I am satisfied.'" (Vol. ii, p. 350, of Laplace's *Collection*.)

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what overwhelms me with grief, is that the first attacks on the reputation of the Queen proceeded from the bosom of the court. What interest could the courtiers have in seeking her destruction, which involved that of the King? Was it not drying up the source of all the advantages they enjoyed, or could hope for?"

But these advantages and favours were no longer the exclusive inheritance of a few powerful families. In distributing benefits, the Queen sometimes thought proper to consult her affections, and other rights besides those of an ancient origin. "Judge," says Montjoie, "of the spite and fury of the great of that class, when they saw the Queen dispense to others those favours which they wished to be considered as due to them alone; it will then be easy to understand how she came to have implacable enemies amongst those who were nearest her person." It was not long before hatred and calumny found another pretext.

That obscure and scandalous plot which was to compromise the most august name, and to dishonour that of a cardinal, was already in preparation. It was conceived by an intriguing female; its principal agent was a forger of writings; it was seconded by a courtesan, unravelled by a Minim, and related by a Jesuit. As if the most singular coincidences were to appear in this famous suit, together with the most odious contrasts, the name of Valois, which had so long ago relapsed into oblivion, now figured along with those of Rohan, Austria, and Bourbon; and when everything conspired to accuse a libertine and credulous



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priest, a great lord, who with 800,000 livres per annum, was nevertheless ruined, an ecclesiastical prince, at once the dupe of a swindler, a woman of intrigue, and a quack; yet it was the Queen whom his credulity injured, as well, perhaps, as his guilty hopes; it was Marie Antoinette to whom suspicion was daringly attached. The court, the clergy, and the parliaments leagued together to humble the throne, and the princess who sat on it. Instead of pitying, they blamed her: they did not even pardon her indulgence of the grief and indignation of an injured woman, wife, and Queen.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of this famous suit is known. The Cardinal was acquitted. Madame de Lamotte, condemned, exposed, and saved only by flight, hastened to publish a pamphlet of the most odious description against the Queen. From that moment, fatal for Marie Antoinette, until her death, attacks of this species were incessantly renewed against her. The spirit of party quickly undertook the direction of them: the press and the graver became equally subservient to the fury of her enemies. Obscene prints, licentious verses, infamous libels, atrocious accusations—*I have seen all, I have read all*, and I wish I could add (like that unfortunate princess, on one of the most honourable occasions of her life), *I have forgotten all*. The perusal and view of these monuments of implacable hatred leave an impression of sadness and disgust

<sup>1</sup> [For the affair of the Diamond Necklace, see the Introduction, pp. xlii-xlix; also vol. i, pp. 86, 87, and vol. ii, pp. 18-38, 351-362.]



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difficult to overcome, and which is increased by the idea of the woes accumulated by calumny on the head of the hapless Marie Antoinette.

Let us not anticipate events: it is not here that the picture of the Queen's last misfortunes is to be found. Her imprisonment, her chains, her destitute condition, the outrages which overwhelmed, the strength of mind which supported her, the maternal affection which still attached her to life, the religious sentiments from which she derived consolation—all these affecting and sublime particulars of a scene, concluded by so tragical a catastrophe, belong to other Memoirs: but there is one reflection which that fatal catastrophe irresistibly excites.

When the terrible Danton exclaimed, “The kings of Europe menace us; it behoves us to defy them; let us throw down to them, as our gage, the head of a King!” these detestable words, followed by so cruel, so lamentable an effect, belonged, however, to a formidable piece of policy. But the Queen! What horrible reasons of State could Danton, Collot d'Herbois, and Robespierre allege against her? Where did they find that those Greeks and Romans, whose military virtues our soldiers recalled, used to murder weak and defenceless beings? What savage greatness did they discover in stirring up a whole nation to avenge their quarrel on a woman? What remained of her former power? Had not the 10th of August torn the diadem from her brow? She was a captive, a widow, trembling for her children! In those judges

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who at once outraged modesty and nature; in that people whose vilest scoffs pursued her to the scaffold, who could have recognised the affable, affectionate, sensitive, generous people of France? No, of all the crimes which so shockingly disgraced the Revolution, none is more calculated to show to what a pitch the spirit of party, when it has fermented in the most corrupt hearts, can deprave the character of a nation.

The news of this dreadful event reached Madame Campan, who was weeping over the misfortunes of her benefactress, in an obscure retreat which she had chosen. She had not succeeded in her endeavours to share the Queen's captivity; and she expected, every moment, a similar fate. After escaping, almost miraculously, from the murdering fury of the Marseillais; after being repulsed by Pétion, when she implored the favour of being confined in the Temple, denounced and pursued by Robespierre, and entrusted, through the entire confidence of the King and Queen, with papers of the utmost importance, Madame Campan went to conceal her charge and indulge her grief at Coubertin, in the valley of Chevreuse. Madame Auguié, her sister, had just committed suicide, at the very moment of her arrest.<sup>1</sup> The scaffold awaited Madame Campan, when the 9th of Thermidor restored her liberty, but did not restore to her the most

<sup>1</sup> Maternal affection prevailed over her religious sentiments; she wished to preserve the wreck of her fortune for her children. Had she deferred this fatal act for one day, she would have been saved; the cart which conveyed Robespierre to execution stopped her funeral procession!

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constant object of her thoughts, her zeal, and her devotion.

A new career now opened to Madame Campan. The information and talents she possessed were about to become useful to her. At Coubertin, surrounded by her nieces, she was fond of directing their studies, as much to divert her mind for a time from her troubles as to form their disposition and judgment. This maternal occupation had caused her ideas to revert to the subject of education, and awakened once more the earliest inclinations of her youth.

Our taste and character develop themselves early in childhood. I remember that in writing an account of the life of Madame Roland, it appeared to me a most interesting spectacle to contemplate the first emotions of her intrepid soul, warmed, even at the most tender age, with enthusiasm for the virtues of antiquity. It was not without surprise that I considered a young girl, at a period of life when pleasure and dress are usually the chief occupations of her sex, fancying herself, in solitude, Clelia stemming the waves of Tiber, or Cornelia exhibiting her Gracchi, as her ornaments, to the Roman ladies.

Rising inclinations are suddenly developed and revealed by circumstances. Many a general owes his epaulettes to the sight of a review; and, in our times, the ceremony and pomp of processions will, no doubt, make many a bishop. At the age of twelve years, Mademoiselle Genet could never meet a school of young ladies, walking out for an airing, or passing



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through the streets, without feeling ambitious of the situation, title, and authority of their mistress. Her abode at court had diverted, but not altered, her ideas and inclinations. At a more advanced age, when able to enlarge the circle of her schemes, she envied Madame de Maintenon in the height of absolute power; not the success of her ambitious hypocrisy, not the mysterious honour of a royal and clandestine union, but the glory of having founded St. Cyr.

It will presently be seen that Madame Campan had neither the treasures nor the authority of Louis XIV at her disposal, for the realisation of her plans. "A month after the fall of Robespierre," she says, in a most interesting document, "I considered of the means of providing for myself, for a mother seventy years of age, my sick husband, my child nine years old, and part of my ruined family. I now possessed nothing in the world but an assignat of five hundred francs. I had become responsible for my husband's debts, to the amount of thirty thousand francs. I chose St. Germain to set up a boarding-school; that town did not remind me, as Versailles did, both of the happy times, and the first misfortunes of France, while it was at some distance from Paris, where our dreadful disasters had occurred, and where people resided with whom I did not wish to be acquainted. I took with me a nun of l'Enfant Jésus, to give an unquestionable pledge of my religious principles.<sup>1</sup> I had not the means of print-

<sup>1</sup> The school of St. Germain was the first in which the opening of an oratory was ventured on. The Directory was displeased at it, and ordered it to be immediately shut up.



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ing my prospectus. I wrote a hundred copies of it, and sent them to those persons of my acquaintance who had survived our dreadful commotions.

“At the year’s end I had sixty pupils; soon afterwards a hundred. I bought furniture, and paid my debts. I rejoiced in having met with this resource so remote from all intrigue.”<sup>1</sup>

The brilliant and rapid success of the establishment at St. Germain was undoubtedly owing to the talents, experience, and excellent principles of Madame Campan. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that she was wonderfully seconded by public opinion. To court, cherish, and show attention to any person who had been at court was to defy and humble the reigning power; and everyone knows that people never denied themselves that pleasure in France. I was then very young, but I did not fail to observe that disposition in those about me. All property had changed hands; all ranks found themselves confusedly jumbled by the shocks of the Revolution: society resembled a library in which the books have been replaced at random, after tearing off the titles. The great lord dined at the table of the opulent contractor; and the marchioness, all brilliance, wit, and elegance, sat at the ball by the side of the clumsy peasant grown rich. In the absence of the ancient distinctions and denominations which had been prescribed by the Directory, elegant manners and pol-

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a Memoir which Napoleon caused to be deposited at the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the Cent Jours.

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ished language now formed an extraordinary kind of aristocracy. The house of St. Germain, conducted by a lady, who possessed the style, deportment, habits, and conversation of the best society, was not only a school of knowledge but a school of the world.

“A literary man, a friend of Madame de Beauharnais,” continued Madame Campan in the manuscript now before me, “mentioned my establishment to her. She brought me her daughter, Hortense de Beauharnais, and her niece, Émilie de Beauharnais. Six months afterwards, she came to inform me of her marriage with a Corsican gentleman, who had been brought up in the military school, and was then a general. I was requested to communicate this information to her daughter, who long lamented her mother’s change of name.

“I was also desired to watch over the education of little Eugène de Beauharnais, who was placed at St. Germain, in the same school with my son.

“My nieces, Mesdemoiselles Auguié, were with me, and slept in the same room as the Mesdemoiselles Beauharnais. A great intimacy took place between these young people. Madame de Beauharnais set out for Italy, and left her children with me. On her return, after the conquest of Bonaparte, that general was much pleased with the improvement of his stepdaughter: he invited me to dine at Malmaison, and attended two representations of ‘Esther’ at my school.”

One of these representations is connected with

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an anecdote which is almost historical. The Duchesse de St. Leu played Esther, the part of Élise was supported by the interesting and unfortunate Madame de Broc.<sup>1</sup> They were united by the same uniformity of age and inclinations, the same mutual friendship, as are attributed to the characters in Racine's drama. Napoleon, who was then Consul, his generals, ministers, and other principal persons in the State attended the representation. The Prince of Orange was also observed there, whom the hope of seeing Holland once more, and of reëstablishing the rights of his house, had, at this period, brought to France. The tragedy of "Esther" was performed by the pupils, with the choruses in music. Everyone knows that in the chorus at the end of the third act, the young Israelites rejoice in the hope of one day returning to their native land.

A young lady says:

*"I shall see once more those dear fields."*<sup>2</sup>

Another adds:

*"I shall weep over the sepulchre of my forefathers."*<sup>3</sup>

At these words, loud sobs were heard; every eye was turned towards a particular part of the room; the

<sup>1</sup> [Adèle Auguié, Baronne de Broc (1788-1813), one of the three daughters of Madame Campan's sister, Madame Auguié who committed suicide during the Revolution. At her aunt's school, Adèle Auguié was an intimate friend of Hortense de Beauharnais, who, when she became Queen of Holland, arranged a marriage for her in 1807 with M. de Broc, Grand Marshal to the Court of Holland. She was drowned at the age of twenty-five.]

<sup>2</sup> Je reverrai ces campagnes si chères.

<sup>3</sup> J'irai pleurer au tombeau de mes pères.

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representation was interrupted for a moment. Napoleon, placed in the first row, leaned towards Madame Campan, who was behind him, and asked her the cause of this agitation. "The Prince of Orange is here," said she; "he perceived something in the verses which have just been sung, applicable to his wishes and situation, and could not restrain his tears." The Consul had already different views: "What is said about returning home does not apply to him, however," said he.

Previously to commencing this notice on the life of Madame Campan, I went over that house at St. Germain which once attracted such a splendid concourse.

I saw that garden, those long covered walks which served for promenades; those rooms in which Plantade gave instruction in singing, and where Mademoiselle Godefroy, the best pupil of a great master, taught painting. I saw that little closet, which many a giddy girl has entered in apprehension of a severe reprimand, and from which she was sure to come out impressed and affected by good and kind admonitions. The appearance of those places is still the same, but how different is their present use! To that lyceum which letters, science, and accomplishments formerly embellished, the rigours and austerity of a cloister have succeeded. Those scenes, in which the sounds of innocent mirth or the lessons of pleasing arts were alternately heard, are become the asylum of fasting, prayer, and silence. The hall of exercises,



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which served for a theatre, has been converted into a chapel; the catechism is taught under the roof which echoed the harmonious verses of Racine; and a few verses of the Psalms, or passages from the Fathers, will soon be substituted for that inscription, which is still half legible on the whitened walls: "Talents are the ornament of the rich, and the wealth of the poor."

In 1802 and 1803, the period destined to produce this change was still far distant. Never had the establishment at St. Germain been in a more flourishing condition. What more could Madame Campan wish for? Her fortune was very respectable; her occupation and duties were agreeable to her taste. She saw around her nothing but attachment and gratitude; abroad she met with nothing but esteem, kindness, and respect. Absolute in her own house, she seemed equally safe from the favours and caprices of power. But the man who then disposed of the fate of France, and regulated that of Europe with the sword, was soon to determine otherwise.

By a decree, dated, as it were, from the field of battle, new rewards and encouragements were secured and proposed to the brave victors of Austerlitz. The State undertook to bring up, at the public expense, the sisters, daughters, or nieces of those who were decorated with the cross of honour. The children of the warriors killed or wounded in glorious battle were to find paternal care in the ancient abodes of the Montmorencys and the Condés; nor could those

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heroes themselves have devoted them to a nobler purpose. Accustomed to concentrate around him all superior talents, fearless himself of superiority, Napoleon sought for a person qualified by experience, name, and abilities, to conduct the institution of Écouen; he selected Madame Campan.

She was now to reap the fruits of ten years' experience at St. Germain. The establishment of Écouen was wholly to create: Madame Campan, therefore, commenced this great undertaking. Comte Lacépède,<sup>1</sup> the pupil, friend, and rival of Buffon,<sup>2</sup> then Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, assisted her with his enlightened advice. The watchful attention which the health, instruction, and even the recreations of three hundred young persons required; the religious duties which formed the basis of their education; the distribution of their time; the methodical and graduated exercise of the powers of their understanding; the harmony of their principles and attainments with their fortune, and the rank in society they were destined to occupy; the difficult art of seizing the principal features of a character, discriminating good from

<sup>1</sup> [Bernard Germain Étienne de la Ville, Comte de Lacépède (1756-1823), the famous naturalist, was the pupil of Buffon, who chose him to continue his *Natural History*. When Napoleon established the School at Écouen for the Daughters of the Legion of Honour, under Madame Campan's management, Comte de Lacépède, at that time Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, was consulted in everything that pertained to the school, and was recognised as its director.]

<sup>2</sup> [Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788), the celebrated naturalist, was, in 1739, admitted to the Academy of Sciences and appointed Intendant of the Jardin du Roi. In 1749 he published the first three volumes of his *Natural History*, which gained for him an immediate European fame. About 1776 he received the title of Comte de Buffon.]

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bad qualities, destroying the germ of the one, and encouraging the others, and of maintaining order and promoting emulation amongst so many pupils of different ages, inclinations, and tempers, without exciting pride—all these cares of a complicated administration, all these details of so delicate an employment, appeared simple, easy, and natural, when Madame Campan was seen to fulfil them. This praise even her enemies could not deny her. At all hours she was accessible to everyone; hearing all questions submitted to her with the greatest equality of temper, and deciding them with extraordinary presence of mind, never addressing admonition, reproach, or encouragement, but opportunely. Napoleon, who could descend with ease from the highest political subjects to the examination of the most minute details; who was as much at home in inspecting a boarding-school for young ladies as in reviewing the grenadiers of his guard; to whom every species of knowledge, every occupation, seemed familiar; whom it was impossible to deceive, and who was not unwilling to find fault—Napoleon, when he visited the establishment at Écouen, was forced to say, “It is all right.”<sup>1</sup>

A second house was formed at St. Denis, on the model of that of Écouen. Perhaps Madame Campan might have hoped for a title, to which her long labours

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon had wished to be informed of every particular of the furniture, government, and order of the house, the instruction and education of the pupils. The internal regulations were submitted to him. One of the intended rules, drawn up by Madame Campan, proposed that the children should hear Mass on Sundays and Thursdays. Napoleon himself wrote in the margin, “Every day.”

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has little effect on youth; the long futurity to which the young look forward makes them hope to triumph over it: but in the decline of life its darts are envenomed with a mortal poison: the griefs which then oppress the heart tear open all its old wounds. Those which Madame Campan had received were deep. Her sister, Madame Auguié, had destroyed herself; M. Rousseau, her brother-in-law, had perished a victim of the Reign of Terror. In 1813, a dreadful accident had deprived her of her niece, Madame de Broc, one of the most amiable and interesting beings that ever adorned the earth. Madame Campan seemed destined to behold those whom she loved go down to the grave before her. In the cemetery of Père la Chaise, amongst those ostentatious mausoleums generally loaded with lying epitaphs; by the side of those monuments, most of which seem raised to flatter the pride of the living rather than out of respect for the ashes of those who sleep beneath them; there is a

I am perfectly sensible, Madame, of the pain you must suffer from everything which can possibly tend to throw any doubt on your attachment and fidelity to the august princess, whom you had the honour to serve, in the duties you performed about her person.

I have great pleasure, Madame, in doing you the justice of declaring that, during the three years in which my place afforded me frequent access to our great and too hapless Queen, I always observed your readiness to show your respect and attachment. I have been witness to her giving you proofs of a peculiar confidence, and to your discretion and fidelity in various circumstances; which qualities you particularly evinced on occasion of that unfortunate journey to Varennes; the reports raised on this subject against you were the most unjust possible. I saw you at the Feuillans, on the night of the 10th of August, offering the Queen the homage of your grief, although it was not at that time your month of duty. This is a homage which I pay to truth, and I should think myself happy if my letter could afford any consolation to the anguish with which your heart is oppressed.

I am, Madame, &c.,

CROY D'HAVRE, DUCHESSE DE TOURZEL.

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modest grave, on which she has often been seen to weep. No marble decorates it; no inscription is read upon it; it is remarkable chiefly for its simplicity; the unostentatious turf, betraying a grief which shrinks from observation, is the only clue to the secret of the tomb.

After so many troubles, Madame Campan sought a peaceful retreat. Paris, the abode of apathy and ambition, of the wicked who promulgate slanders, and the fools who believe them; Paris, inhabited by crowds of men, always equally ready to flatter the powerful of the day, and to revile him whom they flattered the day before; Paris, its frivolity, its noisy pleasures, its egotism, had for some years been insupportable to her. One of her most beloved pupils, Mademoiselle Crouzet, had married a physician at Mantes, a man of talent, distinguished for information, frankness, and cordiality.<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan paid her pupil a visit. Mantes is a pretty little town. The woods of Rosny, which surround it; the Seine, which laves it with its waters; isles planted with lofty poplars, and shady walks, which promise an agreeable solitude, render Mantes a pleasant, cheerful residence. This abode pleased her. She soon fixed her habitation there. A few intimate friends formed a pleasant society, in

<sup>1</sup> M. Maigne, physician to the infirmaries at Mantes. Madame Campan found in him, both in her mental and bodily affliction, a friend and comforter, of whose merit and affection she knew the value. The attentions which he constantly paid her in the course of her illness induced him to write an account of it which evinces his great knowledge of physiology, and in which he has faithfully preserved the last conversations of Madame Campan. In communicating this manuscript to me, he favoured me with many interesting particulars, for which I have now the pleasure of thanking him.

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which she took pleasure. She enjoyed, with surprise, a little tranquillity, after so many disturbances. The revision of her Memoirs, the arrangement of the interesting anecdotes of which her Recollections were to consist, were the only affairs which ever diverted her mind from the one powerful sentiment which attached her to life.

She lived only for her son; for him alone she would have wished for favour or riches: he was her consolation, her wealth, her hope; in him she had concentrated all the inclinations of a heart often deceived in its affections. M. Campan deserved the tenderness of his mother. No sacrifice had been spared for his education. He was accomplished, had much taste, and made agreeable verses. After having pursued that course of study, which, under the imperial government, produced men of distinguished merit, he was waiting till time and circumstance should afford him an opportunity of devoting his services to his country. Although the state of his health was far from good, it did not threaten any rapid or premature decay; he was, however, after a few days' illness, suddenly taken from his family. How was the mother to be informed of this loss? Who could bear to inflict this mortal blow? M. Maigne, in an account with which he was pleased to entrust us, describes this sad moment with mournful accuracy. "I never witnessed so heart-rending a scene," he says, "as that which took place when Marshal Ney's wife, her niece, and Madame Pannelier, her sister, came to acquaint her with

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this misfortune. When they entered her apartment she was in bed. All three at once uttered a piercing cry. The two ladies threw themselves on their knees, and kissed her hands, which they bedewed with tears. Before they could speak to her she read in their faces that she no longer possessed a son. At that instant her large eyes, opening widely, seemed to wander. Her face grew pale, her features changed, her lips lost their colour, she struggled to speak, but uttered only inarticulate sounds, accompanied by piercing cries. Her gestures were wild, her reason was suspended. Every part of her being was in agony. Her respiration scarcely sufficed for the efforts which this unhappy mother made to express her grief, and give vent to her sufferings. To this state of anguish and despair no calm succeeded, until her tears began to flow. Never in my life did I see anything so sad and so awful: never will the impression I received be effaced from my memory." Friendship, and the tenderest cares, succeeded for a moment in calming her grief, but not in diminishing its power. This violent crisis had disturbed her whole organisation. A cruel disorder, which required a still more cruel operation, soon manifested itself. The presence of her family, a tour which she made in Switzerland, a residence at the waters of Baden, and, above all, the sight, the tender and charming conversation of a person by whom she was affectionately beloved, occasionally diverted her mind, but relieved her sufferings only in a very slight degree. She returned to Mantes

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resolved to undergo the operation, and from that moment, far from betraying a moment's weakness or hesitation, she herself hastened the moment which, as she said, was to restore her to hope and health. With the strength of mind which defies pain, she combined the energy of will which masters it. Not a cry, not a gesture escaped her. So much courage astonished old warriors accustomed to the sight of fields of battle, and surprised the professional men themselves.<sup>1</sup> Up to the moment of commencing the operation, she discoursed freely and calmly with them. The pain which followed the operation did not seem to have altered her serenity. "Gentlemen," said she, cheerfully, to her physicians, "I had much rather hear you talk than see you act."

The operation was performed with extraordinary promptitude, and the most complete success, by M. Voisin, a most skilful surgeon of Versailles. No unfavourable symptoms appeared; the wound cicatrised; Madame Campan was thought to be restored to her friends: but the disorder was in the blood; it took another course; the chest became affected. "From that moment," says M. Maigne, who watched her malady with all the solicitude of friendship, "I could never look on Madame Campan as living; she herself felt that she belonged no more to this world."

When she thought of her family, of her friends at Mantes, and of all those who loved her with the

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Hemé, one of the best officers of the old army, assisted the surgeons during the operation.



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most lively affection, her heart failed, and in those moments of affecting weakness she would say, "I shall not die, doctor, shall I?" But soon resuming her courage, she imparted to others a hope which she no longer cherished herself. She constantly saw near her a woman who had never quitted her for forty years; who had shared in her troubles as well as in her hours of prosperity; who guessed her thoughts, watched her slightest wishes, and repaid her unbounded confidence by the attentions of the tenderest attachment: here all who knew Madame Campan will name Madame Voisin. "Courage," said she, "death will not separate two friends like us."<sup>1</sup>

She herself set the example of the strength of mind with which she wished to inspire others. Sometimes looking back to the days of her youth, she saw, in imagination, the young girl so lively and gay, surprised by Louis XV in the midst of her play. Sometimes she thought with emotion on the kindness with which Marie Antoinette repaid her attachment. "The *Œil de Bœuf* at Versailles," said she, "will never forgive me for having obtained the confidence of the King and Queen. The demands of a swarm of flatterers were frequently unjust, and when the Queen condescended to consult me I spoke with sincerity."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Death, in fact, will not separate them. The family of Madame Campan erected a tomb to her in the cemetery of Mantes. It bears a simple epitaph on a column of white marble, surmounted by an urn. Tufts of dahlia adorn the four corners of the monument: beneath is the vault which contains her ashes.

<sup>2</sup> M. Maigne's account.

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Sometimes the fate of France occupied her thoughts. The light which the throne itself diffuses was, in her opinion, the only security against the extravagant claims of some individuals. "Power," said she, "now resides in the laws. In any other situation it would be misplaced. But this truth escapes them. The dust of old parchments blinds them."<sup>1</sup>

The day before her death, "My friend," she said to her physician, "I throw myself into the arms of Providence; that is the only invisible support that can sustain us. The idea is consoling; I am much attached to the simplicity of my religion: I revere it; I hate all that savours of fanaticism."<sup>2</sup> When her codicil was presented for her signature her hand trembled; "It would be a pity," she said, "to stop, when so fairly on the road."

The day she died her window was opened. The sky was clear, the air pure and fresh. "This resembles the air and climate of Switzerland," said she; "I passed there two months of unmixed happiness. — Her soul is so noble, and our hearts understood each other so well!"

Her dissolution rapidly approached. Her mind had lost nothing of its strength. "Notwithstanding my condition," said she, "I am desirous of expressing my thoughts."—"I was a little way from her bed," adds her physician, whose words we have quoted. "She called me in rather a higher tone than usual: I ran

<sup>1</sup> M. Maigne's account.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Before she submitted to an operation which is almost always fatal, Madame Campan had scrupulously fulfilled her religious duties.

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to her. Then, reproaching herself for this little hastiness, 'How imperious one is,' she said, 'when one has no time for politeness.'"—A moment after, she was no more.

Her friends witnessed her decease on the 16th of March, 1822. The cheerfulness she displayed throughout her malady had nothing forced or affected in it. Her character was naturally powerful and elevated. At the approach of death she evinced the soul of a sage without abandoning for an instant her feminine character, without renouncing the hopes and consolations of a Christian. Her religion inclined to indulgence and mildness, which is constantly the case with those whose piety is more a matter of faith and sentiment than of formal observance. Though she had long lived in the higher circles, she did not despise the human race. The envious had never been able to excite a feeling of hatred in her mind; the ungrateful had not wearied her benevolence. Her credit, her time, her plans belonged to her friends; her purse was always open to the unfortunate.

One profound sentiment, her attachment to the Queen—one constant study, the education of youth—occupied her whole life. Napoleon once said to her, "The old systems of education were good for nothing—what do young women stand in need of, to be well brought up in France?" "*Of mothers,*" answered Madame Campan. "It is well said," replied Napoleon. "Well, Madame, let the French be indebted to you for bringing up mothers for their children." Ma-

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dame Campan's answer contains the leading idea of her system of education. All the cares of this excellent preceptress tended to enable her pupils to be one day the teachers of their own daughters. The instructions which she read on Sundays to the young ladies at St. Germain; the little anecdotes which she composed, as much for their instruction as for her own amusement; the work which she was finishing at the moment of her death, and which contains the fruits of twenty years' experience, are all directed to the same object.<sup>1</sup> "Women," said she to her friends, "have lost the empire which chivalric gallantry formerly gave them. They would now disdain that which they obtained at a later period, in the boudoir or on the brilliant stage of the court. Their new dominion ought

<sup>1</sup> Madame Campan left several manuscript tales and plays, of which we shall only quote the titles: "The Old Woman of the Cabin;" "Arabella, or the English Boarding School;" "The Two Educations;" "The Little Strolling Players;" "The Amateur Concerts," &c. The object of all these is the instruction of youth. In her last moments she was completing a work of a more elevated class, "On the Education of Women." No one could do more ample justice to this interesting title than herself. I will quote the first words of this treatise.

"My work will be destitute of the attraction of those fictions almost always connected with plans of education; and the quantity of details which I must lay before my readers gives me some uneasiness. I am also fearful of being led away by my partiality for those innocent and lovely creatures, of whom an amiable crowd surrounded me for so many years, and to whom I have been indebted for such delightful hours; sometimes I am doubtful whether a sort of slowness, the first sad infirmity of age, does not prolong my discourses in spite of me; then I recollect that I am dedicating my work to my old pupils, who are now mothers of families: I consider that in devoting to them the fruit of long experience, I am speaking to them of their dearest affections: and then I feel encouraged."

It is generally known that Madame Campan published the *Conversations of a Mother with her Daughters*. These dialogues have been translated into Italian and English. Madame Campan understood the latter language extremely well. She had given lessons in English to the Queen, and preserved exercises written in that language by Marie Antoinette, until her house was burnt, on the 10th of August.



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to be founded upon good morals, and not in opposition to them. Their success, although perhaps less striking, will be more satisfactory and durable. Every day adds to their information without detracting from the lighter graces, the modest virtues of their sex. But it is not sufficient for their beauty to please, for their wit to charm; they must command esteem by their qualities; their talents must be destined to form the delight of their family, and the circle of their duties must become that of their pleasures likewise."

Surrounded by pupils to whom her conversation was a reward, whether she talked to them of the duties of their sex, or of the most interesting facts in history, the inquisitive attentive crowd pressed around her, eager to catch every word. Sometimes her judicious and keen understanding would draw a salutary lesson from a little amusing story. In past events she often sought traits calculated to enlighten their minds and elevate their sentiments. I call on all the pupils of Écouen to bear witness how often she spoke to them of Louis IX, of Charles V, of Louis XII, of Henri IV, in particular, and of the virtues with which they and their successors had adorned the throne. When she came to the stormy period of the Revolution, she would explain to them the outrages committed against royal majesty, tell them of the descendants of kings living in a foreign land, of Louis XVI and his misfortunes, of the Queen and the afflictions she had been made to endure. These recitals affected

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their young hearts. When they heard her talk of the royal family of France, the daughters of Napoleon's warriors learned the respect that should be paid to calamity, and the gratitude due for benefits received.

Beyond the walls of the mansion of Écouen, in the village which surrounds it, Madame Campan had taken a small house, where she loved to pass a few hours in solitary retirement. There, at liberty to abandon herself to the memory of the past, the superintendent of the imperial establishment became, once more, for the moment, the first lady of the chamber to Marie Antoinette. To the few friends whom she admitted into this retreat, she would show, with emotion, a plain muslin gown which the Queen had worn, and which was made from a part of Tippoo Sahib's present. A cup, out of which Marie Antoinette had drunk, a writing-stand which she had long used, were, in her eyes, of inestimable value; and she has often been discovered sitting, in tears, before the picture which represented her royal mistress.

"Pardon me, august shade! unhappy Queen, pardon me," she says in a fragment I have preserved in her handwriting; "thy portrait is near me whilst I am writing these words. My imagination, impressed with the remembrance of thy sorrows, every instant directs my eyes to those features which I wish to animate, and to read in them whether I am doing service to thy memory in writing this work. When I look at that noble head which fell by the fury of barbarians, tears fill my eyes and suspend my narra-

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tion. Yes, I will speak the truth, by which thy shade can never be injured; truth must prove favourable to her whom falsehood so cruelly wronged."

What should I add to these eloquent words? Madame Campan is no more; let those who slandered her life now insult her memory; her writings will defend her better than I can.





*THE PRIVATE LIFE OF  
MARIE ANTOINETTE*



## PREFACE

BY THE AUTHOR

*THE shelves of our libraries bend under the weight of printed works relating to the last years of the eighteenth century. The grand moral and political causes of our revolutions have already been ably traced by superior intellects. But posterity will look also for the secret springs by which those events were brought about. Memoirs, penned by ministers and favourites, will alone satisfy the inquisitiveness of our descendants, and even these, only to a certain extent; for kings very seldom yield unbounded confidence. The sovereign entrusts to one of those who surround him, a secret mission no way militating against his own known sentiments; and unfolds to him all the details of some affair of high interest. The courtier proceeds under a persuasion of the importance of his mission; but while his pride is flattering itself, while he reposes on a certainty that the royal heart has been opened before him, he little suspects, in the blindness of his vanity, the thousand folds, always concealed from him, which that heart contains. He is but the dupe and tool of him whose confidant he fancies himself. Some other person has perhaps, at the very same moment, received an opposite commission, which, probably, no more tallies with the real designs of the prince than the former. Each singly thinks himself the sole depositary of his sovereign's thoughts; and upon this hollow basis each erects his shadowy edifice of a credit which he does not possess.*

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*This court-game is especially in vogue when the superior power is under the necessity of satisfying, or of conciliating, opposite opinions, without really adopting either. But the practice of thus scattering marks of an illusory confidence has this result, that when the time of commotion and faction arrives, the sovereign finds himself without any solid support, or disinterested attachment.*

*Louis XVI possessed an immense crowd of confidants, advisers, and guides: he selected them even from among the factions which attacked him. Never, perhaps, did he make a full disclosure to any one of them, and certainly he spoke with sincerity to but very few. He invariably kept the reins of all secret intrigues in his own hand; and thence, doubtless, arose the want of coöperation and the weakness which were so conspicuous in his measures. From these causes considerable chasms will be found in the detailed history of the Revolution.*

*In order to become thoroughly acquainted with the latter years of the reign of Louis XV, *Memoirs* written by the Duc de Choiseul, the Duc d'Aiguillon, the Maréchal de Richelieu,<sup>1</sup> and the Duc de la Vauguyon should be before us. To give us a faithful portrait of the unfortunate reign of Louis XVI, the Maréchal du Muy, M. de Maurepas, M. de Vergennes, M. de Malesherbes, the Duc d'Orléans, M. de La Fayette, the Abbé*

<sup>1</sup> I heard the Maréchal de Richelieu desire M. Campan, who was bookseller to the Queen, not to buy the *Memoirs* which would certainly be attributed to him after his death, declaring them false by anticipation, and adding that he was ignorant of orthography, and had never amused himself with writing. Shortly after the death of the marshal, one Soulavie put forth *Memoirs* of the Maréchal de Richelieu. *Note by Madame Campan.*



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*de Vermond, the Abbé Montesquiou, Mirabeau, the Duchesse de Polignac, and the Duchesse de Luynes should have noted faithfully in writing all the transactions in which they took decided parts. As to the secret history of affairs of a later period, it has been disseminated among a much greater number of persons; there are ministers who have published Memoirs, but solely when they had their own measures to justify, and then they confined themselves to the vindication of their own characters, without which powerful motive they probably would have written nothing. In general, those nearest to the sovereign, either by birth or by office, have left no Memoirs; and in absolute monarchies the main springs of great events will be found in particulars which the most exalted persons alone could know. Those who have had but little under their charge find no subject in it for a book; and those who have long borne the burden of public business conceive themselves to be forbidden by duty, or by respect for authority, to disclose all they know. Others again preserve notes, with the intention of reducing them to order when they shall have reached the period of a happy leisure; vain illusion of the ambitious, which they cherish, for the most part, but as a veil to conceal from their sight the terrifying image of their inevitable downfall! and when it does, at length, take place, despair deprives them of fortitude to dwell upon the dazzling period which they never cease to regret.*

*And yet the historian, who is sometimes perplexed at having to choose among the differing versions presented to him by contemporaries, is much more perplexed if*

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writings are wanting to him. He then has recourse to tradition, and trusts to popular gossip; he draws portraits from the political caricatures sketched by hatred, or by flattery; calumny is perpetuated, and some noble characters remain blackened for ever. An ill-conducted enterprise is called criminal; and a successful villain becomes a hero. History no longer furnishes a lesson; it is either a romance, or a polluted and unconnected collection of libels, which perhaps brought the smile of contempt even to the face of him who wrote them.

Louis XVI meant to write his own *Memoirs*: the manner in which his private papers were arranged pointed out this design. The Queen, also, had the same intention; she long preserved a large correspondence, and a great number of minute reports, made in the spirit and upon the event of the moment. But after the 20th of June, 1792, she was obliged to burn the larger portion of what she had collected. Some parts of the correspondence preserved by the Queen were conveyed out of France.

Considering the rank and situations of the persons I have named, as capable of elucidating, by their writings, the history of our political storms, it will not be imagined that I aim at placing myself on a level with them; but I have spent half my life either with the daughters of Louis XV, or with Marie Antoinette. I knew the characters of those princesses; I became privy to some extraordinary facts, the publication of which may be interesting, and the truth of the details will form the merit of my work.

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*I was very young when I was placed about the princesses, the daughters of Louis XV, in the capacity of reader. I was acquainted with the court of Versailles before the time of the marriage of Louis XVI with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette.*

*My father, who was employed in the Department of Foreign Affairs, enjoyed the reputation due to his talents, and to his useful labours. He had travelled much. Frenchmen, on their return home from foreign countries, bring with them a love for their own, increased in warmth; and no man was more penetrated with this feeling, which ought to be the first virtue of every place-man, than my father. Men of high title, academicians, and learned men, both natives and foreigners, sought my father's acquaintance; and were gratified by being admitted into his house.*

*Twenty years before the Revolution, I often heard it remarked that the imposing character of the power of Louis XIV was no longer to be found in the palace of Versailles; that the institutions of the ancient monarchy were rapidly sinking; and that the people, crushed beneath the weight of taxes, were miserable though silent; but that they began to give ear to the bold speeches of the philosophers, who loudly proclaimed their sufferings and their rights; and in short, that the age would not pass away without the occurrence of some grand shock, which would unsettle France, and change the course of its progress.*

*Those who thus spoke were almost all partisans of M. Turgot's system of administration: they were Mira-*



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*beau, the father, Doctor Quesnay, Abbé Baudeau, and Abbé Nicoli, chargé d'affaires to Leopold Grand Duke of Tuscany, and as enthusiastic an admirer of the maxims of the innovators as his sovereign.*

*My father sincerely respected the purity of intention of these politicians. With them, he acknowledged many abuses in the government; but he did not give these political sectarians credit for the talent necessary for conducting a judicious reform. He told them frankly that in the art of moving the great machine of government, the wisest of them was inferior to a good magistrate; and that if ever the helm of affairs should be put into their hands, they would be speedily checked in the execution of their schemes by the immeasurable difference existing between the most brilliant theories and the simplest practice of administration.*

*In one of these conversations, which, young as I was, engaged my attention, I heard my father compare the monarchy of France with a beautiful and antique statue: he agreed that the pedestal which supported it was mouldering away; and that the contours of the statue were disappearing under the parasitical plants which were gradually covering it. "But," he inquired, with a feeling of painful apprehension, "where is the artist skilful enough to repair the base without shaking the statue?" Such adepts were not to be found; and the attempts at restoration only precipitated ruin. The storm of passion burst, the whole monument gave way, and its fall jarred all Europe!*



# GENEALOGICAL TABLE

THERE ARE INCLUDED IN THIS TABLE ONLY THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY OF FRANCE MENTIONED IN MADAME CAMPAN'S MEMOIRS

Louis XIII=Anne of Austria  
1601-1643 1602-1695

Louis XIV=Maria Theresa  
of Spain  
1638-1715 1638-1683

Charlotte Elizabeth (2)=Philippe,  
Orléans  
1640-1701  
daughter of (1) Henrietta Maria of  
England, daughter  
of Charles I

Louis, called "Le Grand Dauphin" = Maria Anne Christina  
of Bavaria  
1661-1711 1660-1690

Philippe, Duke of Orléans=Françoise, Mlle. de Blois, natural  
daughter of Louis XIV and  
Madame de Montespan  
1674-1723

Louis, Duke of Burgundy= Maria Adelaide  
of Savoy  
1682-1712 1685-1713

Philippe, Duke of Anjou = (1) Maria Louisa  
of Savoy  
afterwards King of Spain  
= (2) Elizabeth  
Farnese  
1683-1746

Louis, Duke of Orléans=Augusta Maria  
of Baden  
1703-1752

Louis XV = Marie Leczinska  
1710-1774 1703-1763

Louis Philippe = Louise Henriette de  
Bourbon-Conti  
1725-1785

Louise Elizabeth  
(Madame Infante)  
1727-1759

Louis = (1) Maria Theresa  
of Spain  
1739-1765 1728-1746  
= (2) Maria Josephine  
of Savoy  
1731-1797

Adelaide  
1732-1800

Louise  
1737-1787

Louis Philippe Joseph = Louise Marie de Bourbon-  
Penthèvre  
1747-1793

Louis XVI = Marie  
Antoinette  
of Austria  
1754-1793 1755-1793

Louis XVIII = Maria  
Louisa of  
Sardinia  
1755-1824 1753-1810

Charles X = Maria  
Theresa of  
Sardinia  
1757-1836 1756-1806

Elizabeth  
King of the  
French  
1764-1794 1773-1850

Louis Philippe = Maria Amelia  
of the  
Two Sicilies  
1773-1850 1782-1866

Louis  
1731-1789

Louis XVII  
1785-1795

Sophie  
1786-1797

Maria = Louis, Duke of  
Madame Angoulême  
Royale  
1773-1844 1775-1851

Charles, Duke of Berry = Caroline of the  
Two Sicilies  
1778-1820

Ferdinand = Helena of  
Duke of  
Mecklenbourg-  
Schwerin  
1810-1842 1810-1843

o.s.p.

S. M. GRAVES.



THE PRIVATE LIFE OF  
MARIE ANTOINETTE

CHAPTER I

**I** WAS fifteen years of age when I was appointed reader to the princesses. I will begin by describing the court at that period.

Marie Leczinska was just dead; the death of the dauphin had preceded hers by three years; the Jesuits were suppressed, and piety was to be found at court only in the apartments of the princesses. The Duc de Choiseul was in power.<sup>1</sup>

The king thought of nothing but the pleasures of the chase; it might have been imagined that the courtiers indulged themselves in epigrammatising, by hearing them say seriously, on those days when the king did not hunt, "The king does nothing to-day."

Little journeys were also affairs of great importance with the king. On the first day of the year, he noted down in his almanac the days of departure for Compiègne, for Fontainebleau, Choisy, &c. The weightiest matters, the most serious events, never deranged this distribution of his time.

Etiquette still existed at court with all the severity it had acquired under Louis XIV; dignity alone was wanting. As to gaiety, it was out of the question: Versailles was no longer a rallying point to display

<sup>1</sup> [For an explanation of the state of affairs here referred to by Madame Campan, see Introduction to the present edition.]

## CHARACTER OF LOUIS XV

the wit and grace of Frenchmen. The focus of sense and intelligence was Paris.

Since the death of the Marquise de Pompadour, the king had had no avowed mistress; he contented himself with the pleasures presented to him by his little seraglio of the Parc-aux-Cerfs. It is well known that the monarch found the separation of Louis de Bourbon from the King of France the most animating feature of his royal existence. "They would have it so; they thought it for the best," was his way of expressing himself when the measures of his ministers were unsuccessful. The king delighted to manage the most disgraceful points of his private expenses himself. He one day sold to a head clerk in the War Department, a house in which one of his mistresses had lodged; the contract ran in the name of Louis de Bourbon; and the purchaser himself took in a bag, the price of the house in gold, to the king in his private closet.

Louis XV saw very little of his family; he came every morning by a private staircase into the apartment of Madame Adelaide. He often brought and drank there coffee he had made himself. Madame Adelaide pulled a bell, which apprised Madame Victoire of the king's visit; Madame Victoire, on rising to go to her sister's apartment, rang for Madame Sophie, who in her turn rang for Madame Louise. The apartments of the princesses were of very large dimensions. Madame Louise occupied the farthest room. This latter lady was deformed and very short;



## THE KING'S DÉBOTTER

the poor princess used to run with all her might to join the daily meeting, but, having a number of rooms to cross, she frequently, in spite of her haste, had only just time to embrace her father before he set out for the chase.

Every evening at six, the ladies interrupted my reading to them, to accompany the princes to Louis XV; this visit was called the king's *débotter*,<sup>1</sup> and was marked by a kind of etiquette. The princesses put on an enormous hoop, which set out a petticoat ornamented with gold or embroidery; they fastened a long train round their waists, and concealed the *undress* of the rest of their clothing, by a long cloak of black taffeta which enveloped them up to the chin. The gentlemen ushers, the ladies in waiting, the pages, the esquires, and the ushers bearing large flambeaux, accompanied them to the king. In a moment the whole palace, generally so still, was in motion; the king kissed each princess on the forehead, and the visit was so short, that the reading which it interrupted, was frequently resumed at the end of a quarter of an hour: the princesses returned to their apartments, and untied the strings of their petticoats and trains; they resumed their tapestry, and I my book.

During the summer season the king sometimes came to the residence of the princesses before the hour of his *débotter*. One day he found me alone in Madame Viçtoire's closet, and asked me where *Coche*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Débotter*: meaning the time of unbooting. *Translator*.

<sup>2</sup> *Coche*: meaning an old sow, or a fat woman.

## THE 'PRINCESSES' NICKNAMES

was: I stared, and he repeated his question, but without being at all the more understood. When the king was gone, I asked Madame of whom he spoke. She told me it was herself, and very coolly explained to me, that being the fattest of his daughters, the king had given her the familiar name of *Coche*; that he called Madame Adelaide, *Loque*;<sup>1</sup> Madame Sophie, *Graille*;<sup>2</sup> and Madame Louise, *Chiffe*.<sup>3</sup> Nothing but the zest of these contrasts could afford the king any amusement in the use of such words. The people of his household observed that he knew a great number of them, and it was supposed that he had learned them from his mistresses; possibly too he had amused himself with picking them out from dictionaries. If this style of speaking betrayed the habits and tastes of the king, his manner, however, savoured nothing of such vulgarity; his walk was easy and noble; he had a dignified carriage of the head; and his aspect, without being severe, was imposing; he combined great politeness with a truly regal demeanour, and gracefully saluted the humblest female whom curiosity led into his path.

He was very expert in a number of trifling matters which never occupy attention but when there is a lack of something better to employ it: for instance, he would knock off the top of an egg-shell very cleverly, at a single stroke of his fork; he therefore always ate eggs when he dined in public, and the Parisian Cockneys, who came on Sundays to see the

<sup>1</sup> Rag.      <sup>2</sup> Scrap.      <sup>3</sup> Bad silk, or stuff.



*King Louis XV*





## MADAME HENRIETTE

king dine, returned home less struck with his fine figure than with the dexterity with which he broke his eggs.

Repartees of Louis XV which marked the keenness of his wit and the elevation of his sentiments, were quoted with pleasure in the assemblies of Versailles. They have been recorded in collections of anecdotes, and are generally known.

This prince was still beloved; it was wished that a style of life suitable to his age and dignity should at length cast a veil over the follies of the past, and justify the love cherished by the French for his youth. It gave them pain to judge him harshly. The princesses were blamed for not seeking to prevent the danger of the king forming an intimacy with some new favourite. Madame Henriette, twin sister of the Duchess of Parma,<sup>1</sup> was much regretted; for she had considerable influence over the king's mind, and it was remarked, that if she had lived, she would have been assiduous in finding him amusements in the bosom of his family; that she would have followed him in his short excursions, and would have done the honours of the *petits soupers* which he was so fond of giving in his private apartments.

The princesses too much neglected the means of pleasing the king, but the cause of that was obvious in the little attention he had paid them in their youth.

In order to console the people under their suffer-

<sup>1</sup> Louise Elizabeth, daughter of Louis XV (1727-1759), married in 1739 Don Philip, Infant of Spain and Duke of Parma. Her twin-sister Henriette died in 1752.

## EDUCATION OF MESDAMES

ings, and to shut their eyes to the real depredations on the treasury, the ministers occasionally pressed the most extravagant measures of reform in the king's household, and even on his personal expenses.

Cardinal Fleury,<sup>1</sup> who in truth had the merit of reëstablishing the finances, carried this system of economy so far, as to obtain from the king the suppression of the household and education expenses of the four younger princesses. They were brought up as mere boarders, in a convent, eight leagues distant from the coast. Saint Cyr<sup>2</sup> would have been more suitable for the reception of the king's daughters; probably the cardinal was infected with some of those prejudices which will always attach to even the most useful institutions; and which, since the death of Louis XIV, had been raised against the noble establishment of Madame de Maintenon. He preferred to entrust the education of the princesses to a provincial sisterhood. Madame Louise often assured me that at twelve years of age she was not mistress of the whole alphabet, and never learned to read fluently until after her return to Versailles.

Madame Victoire attributed certain paroxysms

<sup>1</sup> André Hercule de Fleury, Cardinal (1653-1743), was, in 1677, appointed almoner to Anne of Austria. After her death he served Louis XIV in the same capacity, and, in 1698, the king nominated him Bishop of Fréjus. Louis XIV chose him as preceptor to the heir-apparent, who, in 1715, succeeded as Louis XV. Fleury became chief minister in 1726, when he received a cardinal's hat from the Pope.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Cyr, a school near Versailles for indigent young girls of noble birth, founded in 1686 by Louis XIV at the suggestion of Madame de Maintenon, who died and was buried there in 1719. In 1806 Napoleon used the buildings as the nucleus of his celebrated military college which still exists.

## CHARACTERS OF *MESDAMES*

of terror which she was never able to conquer, to the violent alarms she experienced at the Abbey of Fontevrault, when she was sent, by way of penance, to pray alone in the vault where the sisters were interred. No salutary explanation had been afforded to preserve these princesses from those dismal impressions, against which the most unenlightened mother knows how to guard her children.

A gardener belonging to the abbey died raving mad: his habitation without the walls was in the neighbourhood of a chapel of the abbey, where the princesses were taken to repeat the prayers for those in the agonies of death. Their prayers were more than once interrupted by the shrieks of the dying man.

The most absurd indulgences were mixed with these cruel practices. Madame Adelaide, the eldest of these princesses, was haughty and passionate: the good sisters never failed to give way to her ridiculous fancies. The dancing-master, the only professor of graceful accomplishments who had followed the ladies to Fontevrault, was teaching them a dance then much in fashion, which was called the "rose-coloured minuet." Madame Adelaide insisted that it should be named the "blue minuet." The teacher resisted her whim, and urged that he should be laughed at, at court, if the princess should talk of a "blue minuet." The princess refused to take her lesson, stamped, and repeated, "Blue, blue." "Rose, rose," said the master. The sisterhood assembled to decide

## CHARACTERS OF MESDAMES

the important case; the nuns cried, "Blue," with the princess; the minuet was re-christened, and she danced. Among women so little worthy of the office of an instructress there was, however, *one* sister, who, by her judicious tenderness, and by the useful proofs which she gave of it to the princesses, entitled herself to their attachment, and obtained their gratitude: this was Madame de Joulanges, whom they afterwards caused to be appointed Abbess of Royal-Lieu.<sup>1</sup> They also took upon themselves the promotion of this lady's nephews:—those of Madame Mac-Carthy, who had weakly indulged her charge, carried for a long time the musket of the king's guard at the door of the princesses, without the latter thinking of advancing their fortune.

When the princesses, still very young, returned to court, they enjoyed the friendship of the dauphin, and profited by his advice. They devoted themselves ardently to study, and gave up almost the whole of their time to it; they enabled themselves to write French correctly, and acquired a good knowledge of history. Madame Adelaide, in particular, had a most insatiable desire to learn; she was taught to play upon all instruments, from the horn (will it be believed?) to the Jew's harp. Italian, English, the

<sup>1</sup> This excellent woman fell a victim to the revolutionary madness. She and her numerous sisters were led to the scaffold on the same day. While leaving the prison they all chanted the *Veni Creator*, upon the fatal car. When arrived at the place of punishment they did not interrupt their strains. One head fell, and ceased to mix its voice with the celestial chorus — but the strain continued. The abbess suffered last; and her single voice, with increased tone, still raised the devout versicle. It ceased at once — it was the silence of death! *Note by Madame Campan.*



## CHARACTERS OF MESDAMES

higher branches of the mathematics, turning and dialling, filled up, in succession, the leisure moments of the princesses. Madame Adelaide was graced for a short time with a charming figure; but never did beauty so quickly vanish. Madame Victoire was handsome, and very graceful; her address, mien, and smile were in perfect accordance with the goodness of her heart. Madame Sophie was remarkably ugly; never did I behold a person with so revolting an appearance: she walked with the greatest rapidity; and, in order to recognise people without looking at them, she acquired the habit of leering on one side, like a hare. This princess was so exceedingly diffident, that a person might be with her daily, for years together, without hearing her utter a single word. It was asserted, however, that she displayed talent, and even attractiveness, in the society of some favourite ladies. She taught herself a great deal, but she studied alone; the presence of a reader would have disconcerted her very much. There were, however, occasions on which the princess, generally so intractable, became all at once affable and condescending, and manifested the most communicative good nature; this would happen during a storm; she was afraid of it, and so great was her alarm on such an occasion, that she then approached the most humble, and would ask them a thousand obliging questions; a flash of lightning made her squeeze their hands; a peal of thunder would drive her to embrace them; but with the return of the calm the princess resumed

## CHARACTERS OF *MESDAMES*

her stiffness, her reserve, and her repulsive air, and passed all by, without taking the slightest notice of anyone, until a fresh storm restored to her at once her dread and her affability.

The ladies found, in a beloved brother, whose rare attainments are known to all Frenchmen, a guide in everything wanting to their education, so much neglected in infancy. In their august mother, Marie Leczinska, they possessed the noblest monument of every pious and social virtue: that princess, by her eminent qualifications and her modest dignity, veiled the failings with which, most unhappily, the king was liable to be reproached; and while she lived she preserved in the court of Louis XV that suitable and imposing tone which alone supports the respect due to power. The princesses, her daughters, were worthy of her; and, if a few degraded beings did aim the shafts of calumny at them, these shafts dropped harmless, warded off by the high idea entertained of the elevation of their sentiments, and the purity of their conduct.

If the ladies had not tasked themselves with numerous occupations, they would have been much to be pitied. They loved walking, but could enjoy nothing beyond the public gardens of Versailles: they would have cultivated flowers, but could have no others than those in their windows.

The Marquise de Durfort, since Duchesse de Civrac,<sup>1</sup> afforded to Madame Victoire the sweets of

<sup>1</sup> The Duchesse de Civrac, grandmother of two heroes of La Vendée, Lescure



*Madame Sophie*





## MADAME LOUISE

an amiable society. The princess spent almost all her evenings with that lady; and ended by fancying herself domiciled with her.

Madame de Narbonne had, in a similar way, taken pains to make her intimate acquaintance agreeable to Madame Adelaide.

Madame Louise had for many years lived in great seclusion: I read to her five hours a day; my voice frequently betrayed the exhaustion of my lungs; the princess would then prepare sugared water for me, place it by me, and apologise for making me read so long, on the score of having prescribed a course of reading for herself.

One evening, while I was reading, she was informed that M. Bertin, Minister of the Escheats,<sup>1</sup> desired to speak with her: she went out abruptly, returned, resumed her silks and embroidery, and made me resume my book; when I retired, she commanded me to be in her closet the next morning at eleven o'clock. When I got there, the princess was gone out; I learned that she had gone at seven in the morning to the convent of the Carmelites of Saint Denis, where she was desirous of taking the veil. I went to Madame Victoire. There I heard that the king alone had been

and La Roche-Jaquelin, by the marriage of her eldest daughter with M. d'Onissan; and of the unfortunate Labédoyère by the marriage of her second daughter with M. de Chastellux. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>1</sup> Henri Léonard Jean Baptiste Bertin (1719-1792) in 1759 succeeded Silhouette as Comptroller-General of Finance. The exchequer was empty, the credit of the nation exhausted, and Bertin staved off impending ruin by borrowing at extravagant interest. When demands for payment came he levied fresh taxes which the Parliaments refused to sanction. Bertin, unable to face the crisis, resigned. During his term of office he encouraged Arts and Letters.

## MADAME LOUISE

acquainted with Madame Louise's project; that he had kept it faithfully secret, and that, having long previously opposed her wish, he had only on the preceding evening sent her his consent; that she had gone alone into the convent, where she was expected; and that, a few minutes afterwards, she had made her appearance at the grate, to show the Princesse de Guistel, who had accompanied her to the convent-gate, and to her attendant, the king's order to leave her in the monastery.

Upon receiving the intelligence of her sister's departure, Madame Adelaide gave way to violent paroxysms of rage; and reproached the king bitterly for the secret, which he had thought it his duty to preserve. Madame Victoire missed the society of her favourite sister, but she only shed tears in silence on her abandonment of them. The first time I saw this excellent princess after that event, I threw myself at her feet, kissed her hand, and asked her, with all the confidence of youth, whether she would quit us as Madame Louise had done? She raised me, embraced me, and said, pointing to the sofa upon which she was extended, "Make yourself easy, my dear; I shall never have Louise's courage. I love the conveniences of life too well; *this couch is my destruction.*" As soon as I obtained permission to do so, I went to Saint Denis to see my august and sainted mistress; she deigned to receive me with her face uncovered, in her private parlour; she told me she had just left the wash-house, and that it was her turn that day to

## MADAME LOUISE

attend the linen. "I much abused your youthful lungs for two years before the execution of my project," added she: "I knew that here I could read none but books tending to our salvation, and I wished to review all the historians that had interested me."

She informed me that the king's consent for her to go to Saint Denis had been brought to her while I was reading; she prided herself, and with reason, upon having returned to her closet without the slightest mark of agitation, though she said she felt so keenly, that she could scarcely regain her chair. She added, that moralists were right, when they said that happiness does not dwell in palaces; that she had proved it; and that if I desired to be happy, she advised me to come and enjoy a retreat in which the liveliest imagination might find full exercise in the contemplation of a better world. I had no palace, no earthly grandeur to sacrifice to God; nothing but the bosom of a united family; and it is precisely there that the moralists whom she cited have placed true happiness. I replied, that in private life the absence of a beloved and cherished daughter would be too cruelly felt by her family. The princess said no more on the subject.

The seclusion of Madame Louise was attributed to various motives: some were unkind enough to suppose it to have been occasioned by her mortification at being, in point of rank, the last of the princesses. I think I penetrated the true cause.

Her soul was lofty; she loved everything sublime; often, while I was reading, she would interrupt

## MADAME VICTOIRE

me to exclaim, "That is beautiful! that is noble!" There was but one brilliant action she could perform—to quit a palace for a cell, and rich garments for a stuff gown. She achieved it.

I saw Madame Louise two or three times more at the grate. I was informed of her death by Louis XVI. "My aunt Louise," said he to me, "your old mistress, is just dead at Saint Denis. I have this moment received intelligence of it. Her piety and resignation were admirable, and yet the delirium of my good aunt recalled to her recollection that she was a princess, for her last words were, 'To paradise, haste, haste, full speed.' No doubt she thought she was again giving orders to her groom."<sup>1</sup>

Madame Victoire, good, sweet-tempered, and affable, lived with the most amiable simplicity in a society wherein she was much caressed: she was adored by her household. Without quitting Versailles, without sacrificing her indolent sofa, she fulfilled the duties of religion with punctuality, gave to the poor all that she possessed, and strictly observed Lent and the fasts. It is true that the table of the princesses had acquired a reputation for dishes of abstinence which drove assiduous parasites to that of their *maître d'hôtel*. Madame Victoire was not indifferent to good living, but she had the most religious scruples respecting dishes which it was allowable for her to eat of at penitential times. I saw her one day ex-

<sup>1</sup> Since Madame Campan relates this anecdote we will not dispute its authenticity; but it seems to agree but little with the pious sentiments and reserved manners of Louis XVI. *Note by the Editor.*



## MADAME VICTOIRE

ceedingly tormented by her doubts about a water-fowl, a dish often served up to her during Lent. The question to be irrevocably determined was whether it was fish or flesh. She consulted a bishop, who happened to be of the party: the prelate immediately assumed a decided tone of voice, and the grave attitude of a judge who is about to pronounce sentence. He answered the princess, that it had been resolved in a similar case of doubt, that after dressing the bird, it should be pricked over a very cold silver dish: that if the gravy of the animal congealed within a quarter of an hour the creature was to be accounted flesh; but if the gravy remained in an oily state, it might be eaten at all times without scruple. Madame Victoire immediately made the experiment: the gravy did not congeal; and this was a source of great joy to the princess, who was very fond of that sort of game. The abstinence which so much occupied the attention of Madame Victoire, was so disagreeable to her, that she listened with impatience for the midnight hour of Holy Saturday being struck; and then she was immediately supplied with a good dish of fowl and rice, and sundry other succulent viands. She confessed, with such amiable candour, her taste for good cheer and the comforts of life, that it would have been necessary to be as severe in principle as insensible to the excellent qualities of the princess to make it a crime in her.

Madame Adelaide had more talent than Madame Victoire; but she was altogether deficient in that kind-

## MADAME ADELAIDE

ness which alone creates affection for the great: abrupt manners, a harsh voice, and a short way of speaking, rendered her more than imposing. She carried the idea of the prerogative of rank to a high pitch. One of her chaplains was unlucky enough to say *Dominus Vobiscum*, with rather too easy an air: the princess rated him soundly for it after Mass, and told him to remember that he was not a bishop, and not again to think of officiating in the style of a prelate.

The ladies lived quite separate from the king. Since the death of Madame de Pompadour<sup>1</sup> he had lived alone. The enemies of the Duc de Choiseul did not know in what department, nor through what channel they could prepare and bring about the downfall of the man who stood in their way. The king was connected only with women of so low a class, that they could not be made use of for any protracted intrigue; moreover the Parc-aux-Cerfs was a seraglio, the beauties of which were often replaced; it was desirable to give the king a mistress who might form a circle round her, and in whose drawing-room, through the power of daily insinuations, the long-standing attachment of the king for the Duc de Choiseul might be overcome. It is true that Madame du Barry<sup>2</sup> was selected from a class

<sup>1</sup> [Jeanne Antoinette Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour (1721-1764), was married in 1741 to Normand d'Étioles. Beautiful and accomplished, she attracted the attention of the king, who, in 1745, made her his *maîtresse en titre*, and gave her the title of Marquise de Pompadour. She appointed officials of all ranks, received ambassadors, corresponded with foreign courts, and retained her power over the king till her death.]

<sup>2</sup> [Marie Jeanne Gomar de Vaubernier, Comtesse du Barry (1746-1793),

## MADAME DU BARRY

sufficiently low. Her origin, her education, her habits, and everything about her, bore a character of vulgarity and shamelessness; but by marrying her to a man who dated his ancestors from the year 1400, it was thought scandal would be avoided. The conqueror of Mahon<sup>1</sup> conducted this vile intrigue.<sup>2</sup> Such a mistress was judiciously selected for the diversion of the latter years of a man weary of grandeur, fatigued with pleasure, and cloyed with voluptuousness. Neither the wit, the talents, the graces of the Marquise de Pompadour, her regular beauty, nor even her love for the king, would have had any further influence over that worn-out being.

He wanted a Roxalana of familiar gaiety, without any respect for the dignity of the sovereign. Madame du Barry one day so far forgot propriety as to desire

a woman of low origin, who became mistress of the king after the death of Madame de Pompadour. She contributed to the fall of the Duc de Choiseul, and the Duc d'Aiguillon became her intimate confidant. The death of Louis XV in 1774 ended her disgraceful reign at court. She was exiled to the Abbey of Pont-aux-Dames, but was permitted the next year to retire to her house at Luciennes. She was guillotined in 1793.]

<sup>1</sup> [Louis François Armand du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu (1696-1788), Marshal of France. This brilliant diplomat and soldier was sent as ambassador to Vienna in 1725; then, entering the army, he was made Lieutenant-General of the king in Languedoc in 1738. After several campaigns, he again achieved distinction as ambassador to Dresden in 1746, where he negotiated the marriage between the dauphin and Marie Joséphine de Saxe, daughter of Augustus II of Poland. He captured Minorca from the British in 1756.]

<sup>2</sup> It appeared at this period as if every feeling of dignity was lost. "Few noblemen of the French court," says a writer of the time, "preserved themselves from the general corruption. The Maréchal de Brissac was one of them. He was bantered on the strictness of his principles of honour and honesty; it was thought strange that he should be offended at being thought, like so many others, exposed to hymeneal disgrace. Louis XV, who was present, and laughed at his angry fit, said to him, 'Come, M. de Brissac, don't be angry; 't is but a trifling evil; take courage.' 'Sire,' replied M. de Brissac, 'I possess all kinds of courage except that which can brave shame.'" *Note by the Editor.*



## MADAME DU BARRY

to be present at a council of state: the king was weak enough to consent to it: there she remained ridiculously perched up on the arm of his chair, playing off all sorts of childish monkey-tricks calculated to please an old sultan.

Another time she snatched a packet of sealed letters from the king's hand; among them she had observed one from Comte de Broglie; she told the king that she knew that rascal Broglie spoke ill of her to him, and that for that once, at least, she would make sure he should read nothing respecting her. The king wanted to get the packet again; she resisted, and made him run two or three times round the table, which was in the middle of the council-chamber, and then, on passing the fire-place, she threw the letters into the grate, where they were consumed. The king became furious; he seized his audacious mistress by the arm, and put her out of the door without speaking to her. Madame du Barry thought herself utterly disgraced; she returned home, and remained two hours alone, abandoned to the utmost distress. The king went to her: the countess, in tears, threw herself at his feet, and he pardoned her.

Madame la Maréchale de Beauvau,<sup>1</sup> the Duchesse de Choiseul,<sup>2</sup> and the Duchesse de Gramont<sup>3</sup> had re-

<sup>1</sup> [Marie Sylvie de Rohan-Chabot, Maréchale, Princesse de Beauvau, married Charles Juste de Beauvau, Marshal of France.]

<sup>2</sup> [Louise Honorine Crozat, daughter of the Marquis du Châtel, married in 1750 Comte, afterwards Duc, de Choiseul-Stainville.]

<sup>3</sup> [Béatrix de Choiseul-Stainville, Duchesse de Gramont (1730-1794), sister of the Duc de Choiseul, married in 1759 the Duc de Gramont.]



## LA MARÉCHALE DE BEAUVAU

nounced the honour of the king's intimate acquaintance, rather than share it with Madame du Barry. But a few years after the death of Louis XV, Madame la Maréchale, being alone at the Val, a house belonging to M. de Beauvau, Mademoiselle de Dillon saw the countess's calash take shelter in the forest of Saint-Germain during a violent storm. She invited her in, and the countess herself related these particulars, which I had from Madame de Beauvau.<sup>1</sup>

The Comte du Barry, surnamed *le roué* (the profligate), and Mademoiselle du Barry advised, or rather prompted Madame du Barry in furtherance of the plans of the party of the Maréchal de Richelieu and the Duc d'Aiguillon.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes they set her to act even in such a way, as to have a useful influence upon great political measures. Under pretence that the page who accompanied Charles the First in his flight was a Du Barry or Barrymore, they persuaded

<sup>1</sup> Chamfort relates differently Madame du Barry's visit to the Val. "Madame du Barry," says he, "being at Vincennes, was curious to see the Val. Madame de Beauvau was amused at the idea of going there and doing the honours. She talked of what had happened under Louis XV. Madame du Barry was complaining of various matters, which appeared to show that she was personally detested. 'By no means,' said Madame de Beauvau, 'we aimed at nothing but your place.' After this frank confession Madame du Barry was asked if Louis XV did not say a great deal against her (Madame de Beauvau), and Madame de Gramont. 'Oh, a great deal.' 'Well, and what of me, for instance?' 'Of you, madame? That you are haughty and intriguing, and that you lead your husband by the nose.' M. de Beauvau was present. The conversation was soon changed." *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> [Armand Vignerot Duplessis Richelieu, Duc d'Aiguillon (1720-1798), Minister of Foreign Affairs under Louis XV in 1771-74. He took office under the justly unpopular Maupeou administration, during which the first partition of Poland took place. Under his ministry, France declined from her rank among nations. When Louis XVI came to the throne, he was deposed from office, and banished to the government of Brittany. He died in exile, scorned and forgotten.]

## STATE OF THE PUBLIC MIND

the Comtesse du Barry to buy in London that fine portrait which we now have in the museum. She had the picture placed in her drawing-room, and when she saw the king hesitating upon the violent measure of breaking up his parliament, and forming that which was called the Maupeou Parliament, she desired him to look at the portrait of a king who had given way to his parliament.

The men of ambition who were labouring to overthrow the Duc de Choiseul, strengthened themselves by their concentration at the house of the favourite, and succeeded in their project. The bigots who never forgave that minister the suppression of the Jesuits, and who had always been hostile to a treaty of alliance with Austria, influenced the minds of the princesses. The Duc de la Vauguyon,<sup>1</sup> the young dauphin's governor, infected them with the same prejudices.

Such was the state of the public mind when the young Archduchess Marie Antoinette arrived at the court of Versailles, just at the moment when the party which brought her was about to be overcome.<sup>2</sup>

Madame Adelaide openly avowed her dislike of a princess of the House of Austria; and when M. Campan went to receive his orders, at the moment of

<sup>1</sup> [Antoine Paul Jacques de Quélen, Duc de la Vauguyon, Marshal of France (1706-1772). In 1758 he was appointed governor to the eldest son of the dauphin, the Duc de Bourgogne, who died in 1761. The dauphin, when dying in 1765, recommended to his care the education of his three sons, who became respectively, Louis XVI, Louis XVIII, and Charles X.]

<sup>2</sup> See Historical Illustrations (Note I, p. 263), for an account which explains the strength, means, projects, and hopes of the two parties which divided the court of Louis XV at that period. *Note by the Editor.*

## *DISAPPROVAL OF THE MARRIAGE*

setting off with the household of the dauphiness, to receive the archduchess upon the frontiers, she said she disapproved of the marriage of her nephew with an archduchess; and that, if she had the direction of the matter, she would not send for an Austrian.

## CHAPTER II

MARIE-ANTOINETTE-JOSÈPHE-JEANNÉ DE LORRAINE, Archduchess of Austria, daughter of Francis de Lorraine<sup>1</sup> and Maria Theresa, was born on the 2d of November, 1755, the day of the Lisbon earthquake; and this catastrophe, which appeared to stamp the era of her birth with a fatal mark, without forming a motive for superstitious fear with the princess, nevertheless made an impression upon her mind. As the empress already had a great number of daughters, she ardently desired to have another son, and playfully wagered against her wish with the Duke de Tarouka, who had insisted that she would give birth to an archduke. He lost by the birth of the princess, and had executed in porcelain a figure with one knee bent on the earth, and presenting tablets, upon which the following lines by the celebrated Metastasio were engraved:

*“Io perdei: l’ augusta figlia  
A pagar, m’ a condannato;  
Ma s’è ver che a voi simiglia,  
Tutto il mondo ha guadagnato.”*

The queen was fond of talking of the first years of her youth. Her father, the Emperor Francis, had made a deep impression upon her heart; she lost him when she was scarcely seven years old. One of

<sup>1</sup> [Francis I, Emperor (1708-1765), eldest son of Leopold, Duke of Lorraine, married Maria Theresa, daughter and heiress of the Emperor Charles VI, in 1736, and thus became the founder of the reigning dynasty of Hapsburg-Lorraine. He was the father of Marie Antoinette.]



## YOUTH OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

those circumstances which fix themselves strongly in the memories of children, frequently recalled his last caresses to her. The emperor was setting out for Innsbruck; he had already left his palace, when he ordered a gentleman to go to the Archduchess Marie Antoinette, and bring her to his carriage. When she came, he stretched out his arms to receive her, and said, after having pressed her to his bosom, "I wished to embrace this child once more." The emperor died suddenly during the journey, and never saw his beloved daughter again.

The queen often spoke of her mother, and with profound respect, but she formed all her schemes for the education of her children by the essentials which had been neglected in her own. Maria Theresa, who inspired awe by her great qualities, taught the archduchesses to fear and respect rather than to love her; at least I observed it in the queen's feelings towards her august mother. She therefore never desired to place between her own children and herself, that distance which had existed in the imperial family. She cited a fatal consequence of it, which had made upon her such a powerful impression as time had never been able to efface. The wife of the Emperor Joseph II was taken from him in a few days by an attack of smallpox of the worst kind. Her coffin had recently been deposited in the vault of the imperial family. The Archduchess Josepha, who had been betrothed to the King of Naples, at the instant she was quitting Vienna received an order from the empress not to set

## YOUTH OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

off without having offered up a prayer in the vault of her forefathers. The archduchess, persuaded that she should take the disorder to which her sister-in-law had just fallen a victim, looked upon this order as her death-warrant. She loved the young Archduchess Marie Antoinette tenderly: she took her upon her knees, embraced her with tears, and told her she was about to leave her, not for Naples, but never to see her again; that she was going down then to the tomb of her ancestors, and that she should shortly go again, there to remain. Her anticipation was realised; a confluent smallpox carried her off in a few days, and her youngest sister<sup>1</sup> ascended the throne of Naples in her place.

The empress was too much taken up with high political interests to have it in her power to devote herself to maternal attentions. The celebrated Van Swieten, her physician, went daily to visit the young imperial family, and afterwards to Maria Theresa, and gave the most minute details respecting the health of the archdukes and archduchesses, whom she herself sometimes did not see for eight or ten days at a time. As soon as the arrival of a stranger of rank at Vienna was made known, the empress brought her family about her, admitted them to her table, and by this concerted meeting induced a belief that she herself presided over the education of her children.

<sup>1</sup> [Carolina Maria, Queen of Naples (1752-1814), daughter of Francis I and Maria Theresa, married in 1768 Ferdinand, King of the Two Sicilies. They were expelled by Napoleon from Naples in 1806, when they retired to the island of Sicily.]

## *A NEGLECTED EDUCATION*

The chief governesses, being under no fear of inspection from Maria Theresa, aimed at making themselves beloved by their pupils, by the common and blamable practice of indulgence, so fatal to the future progress and happiness of infancy. Marie Antoinette was the cause of her governess being dismissed, through a confession that all her copies, and all her letters, were invariably first traced out with pencil; the Comtesse de Brandès was appointed to succeed her, and fulfilled her duties with great exactness and talent. The queen thought it was unfortunate that she had been confided to her care so late, and always continued upon terms of friendship with her. The education of Marie Antoinette was certainly very much neglected.<sup>1</sup> The public prints, however, teemed with assertions of the superior talents of Maria Theresa's children. They often noticed the answers which the young princesses gave in Latin to the harangues addressed to them; they uttered them, it is true, but without understanding them: they knew not a single word of that language.

Mention was one day made to the queen of a drawing made by her, and presented by the empress to M. Gérard, Chief Secretary of Foreign Affairs, on the occasion of his going to Vienna to draw up the articles for her marriage-contract. "I should blush," said

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Italian language, all that related to belles-lettres, and particularly to history, even that of her own country, was almost entirely unknown to her. This was soon found out at the court of France, and thence arose the generally received opinion that she was deficient in sense. It will be seen in the course of these Memoirs, whether that opinion was well or ill founded. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## LANGUAGES AND MUSIC

she, "if that proof of the quackery of my education were shown to me. I do not believe I ever put a pencil upon that drawing." However, what had been taught her she knew perfectly well. Her facility of learning was inconceivable, and if all her teachers had been as well informed, and as faithful to their duty, as the Abbé Metastasio, who taught her Italian, she would have attained as great a proficiency in the other branches of her education. The queen spoke that language with grace and ease, and translated the most difficult poets. She did not write French correctly, but she spoke it with the greatest fluency, and even affected to say that she had lost the German. In fact she attempted, in 1787, to learn her mother-tongue, and took lessons assiduously for six weeks; she was obliged to relinquish them, finding all the difficulties which a Frenchwoman, who should take up the study too late, would have to encounter. In the same manner she gave up English, which I had taught her for some time, and in which she had made rapid progress. Music was the accomplishment in which the queen most delighted. She did not play well on any instrument, but she had become able to read at sight like a first-rate professor. She had attained this degree of perfection in France, this branch of her education having been neglected at Vienna as much as the rest. A few days after her arrival at Versailles, she was introduced to her singing-master, La Garde, author of the opera "Eglé." She made a distant appointment with him, needing, as she said, rest after





*Madame Louise*



## SELECTION OF TEACHERS

the fatigues of the journey, and the numerous fêtes which had taken place at Versailles; but her motive was her desire to conceal how far she was ignorant of the rudiments of music. She asked M. Campan<sup>1</sup> whether his son, who was a good musician, could give her lessons secretly for three months. "The dauphiness," added she, smiling, "must be careful of the reputation of the archduchess." The lessons were given privately, and at the end of three months of constant application she sent for M. La Garde, and surprised him by her skill.

The desire to perfect Marie Antoinette in the study of the French language was probably the motive which determined Maria Theresa to provide for her as teachers two French actors, Aufresne, for pronunciation and declamation, and one Sainville, for taste in French singing; the latter had been an officer in France, and bore a bad character. The choice gave just umbrage to our court. The Marquis de Durfort, at that time ambassador at Vienna, was ordered to make a representation to the empress upon her selection. The two actors were dismissed, and that princess required that an ecclesiastic should be sent to her. It was at that period that the Duc de Choiseul was desirous to send her a preceptor. Several eminent ecclesiastics declined taking upon themselves so delicate an office; others who were pointed out by Maria Theresa (among the rest the Abbé

<sup>1</sup> [M. Campan, reader and librarian to Marie Antoinette, and father-in-law to Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan, writer of the *Private Life of Marie Antoinette*.]

## THE ABBÉ DE VERMOND

Grisel ) belonged to parties which sufficed to exclude them.

The Archbishop of Toulouse, since Archbishop of Sens, one day went to the Duc de Choiseul, at the moment when he was really embarrassed upon the subject of this nomination; he proposed to him the Abbé de Vermond,<sup>1</sup> librarian of the College des Quatre Nations. The advantageous manner in which he spoke of his *protégé* procured the appointment for the latter on that very day; and the gratitude of the Abbé de Vermond towards the prelate was very fatal to France, inasmuch as after seventeen years of persevering attempts to bring him into the Ministry, he succeeded at last in getting him named Comptroller-General and President of the Council.

This Abbé de Vermond, of whom, because his powers always remained in the shade, historians say but little, directed almost all the queen's actions. He had established his influence over her at an age when impressions are the most durable; and it was easy to see that he had taken pains only to render himself beloved by his pupil, and had troubled himself very little with the care of instructing her. He might have even been accused of having, by a sharp-sighted though culpable policy, left her in ignorance. Marie Antoinette spoke the French language with much

<sup>1</sup> [Matthieu Jacques de Vermond (1735-179-), son of a country doctor, became doctor of the Sorbonne in 1757, and librarian of the Mazarin College. In 1769 he was sent to Vienna to finish the education of Marie Antoinette, the future wife of the dauphin. After her marriage in 1770, she kept him at court with the title of Reader. At the taking of the Bastille in 1789 he fled to Vienna.]



## THE ABBÉ DE VERMOND

grace, but wrote it less perfectly. The Abbé de Vermond revised all the letters which she sent to Vienna. The insupportable folly with which he boasted of it developed the character of a man more flattered at being admitted into her confidence than anxious to fulfil worthily the high office of her preceptor.

His pride received its birth at Vienna, where Maria Theresa, as much to give him authority with the archduchess as to make herself mistress of his character, permitted him to mix every evening with the private circle of her family, into which the future dauphiness had been admitted for some time. Joseph II,<sup>1</sup> the elder archduchesses, and a few noblemen honoured by the confidence of Maria Theresa, composed the party; and all that could be expected from persons of exalted rank in reflections on the world, on courts, and the duties of princes, were the usual topics of conversation. The Abbé de Vermond in relating these particulars, confessed the means which he had made use of to gain admission into this private circle. The empress, meeting with him at the archduchess's, asked him if he had formed any connections in Vienna. "None, madame," replied he; "the apartment of the archduchess and the hotel of the ambassador of France are the only places which the man honoured with the care of the princess's education should frequent." A month afterwards, Maria

<sup>1</sup> [Joseph II, Emperor (1741-1790), eldest son of Francis I and Maria Theresa. He succeeded his father as Emperor in 1765, and inherited the possessions and dignities of the House of Austria on the death of his mother in 1780.]

## THE ABBÉ DE VERMOND

Theresa, through a habit common enough among sovereigns, asked him the same question, and received precisely the same answer. The next day he received an order to be with the imperial family every evening.

It is extremely probable, from the constant and well-known intercourse between this man and Comte de Mercy, ambassador of the empire during the whole reign of Louis XVI, that he was useful to the court of Vienna,<sup>1</sup> and that he often caused the queen to decide on measures, the consequences of which she did not consider. Born in a low class of citizens,<sup>2</sup> imbued with all the principles of the modern philosophy, and yet holding to the hierarchy of the Church more tenaciously than any other ecclesiastic; vain, talkative, and at the same time cunning and abrupt, very ugly and affecting singularity; treating the most exalted persons as his equals, sometimes even as his inferiors, the Abbé de Vermond received ministers and bishops when in his bath; but said at the same time that Cardinal Dubois was a fool; that a man such as he, having obtained power, ought to make cardinals and refuse to be one himself.

Intoxicated with the reception he had met with at

<sup>1</sup> A person who had dined with the abbé one day at the Comte de Mercy's, said to that ambassador, "How can you bear that tiresome proser?" "How can you ask it?" replied M. de Mercy; "you could answer the question yourself: it is because I want him." *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé de Vermond was the son of a village surgeon, and brother of an accoucheur, who had acted in that capacity for the queen: when he was with her Majesty, in speaking to his brother, he never addressed him otherwise than as Monsieur l'Accoucheur. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## THE ABBÉ DE VERMOND

the court of Vienna, and having till then seen nothing of grandeur, the Abbé de Vermond admired and valued no other customs than those of the imperial family; he ridiculed the etiquette of the House of Bourbon incessantly; the young dauphiness was constantly incited by his sarcasms to get rid of it, and it was he who first induced her to suppress an infinity of practices of which he could discern neither the prudence nor the political aim. Such is the faithful portrait of that man whom the unlucky star of Marie Antoinette had reserved to guide her first steps upon a stage so conspicuous and so full of danger as that of the court of Versailles.

It will be thought, perhaps, that I draw the character of the Abbé de Vermond too unfavourably; but how can I view with any complacency one who, after having arrogated to himself the office of confidant and sole counsellor of the queen, guided her with so little prudence, and gave us the mortification of seeing that princess blend, with qualities which charmed all that surrounded her, errors alike injurious to her reputation and her happiness? When a man voluntarily takes upon himself duties so important, complete success alone can sanctify his ambition.

While the Duc de Choiseul, satisfied with the person whom M. de Brienne had presented, sent him to Vienna with every eulogium calculated to inspire unbounded confidence, the Marquis de Durfort sent off a *valet de chambre*, and a few French fashions; and then it was thought sufficient pains had been

## CARDINAL DE ROHAN

taken to form the character of a princess destined to the throne of France.

It is universally known that the marriage of the dauphin with the archduchess was determined upon during the administration of the Duc de Choiseul. The Marquis de Durfort, who was to succeed the Baron de Breteuil in the embassy to Vienna, was appointed proxy for the marriage ceremony; but six months after the dauphin's marriage the Duc de Choiseul was disgraced, and Madame de Marsan and Madame de Guéménée, who grew more powerful through the duke's disgrace, conferred that embassy upon Prince Louis de Rohan, afterwards cardinal and grand almoner.

Hence it will be seen that the *Gazette de France* is a sufficient answer to those ignorant libellers who dared to assert that the young archduchess was acquainted with the Cardinal de Rohan before the period of her marriage. A worse selection in itself, or one more disagreeable to Maria Theresa, than that which sent to her in quality of ambassador a man so light and so immoral as Prince Louis de Rohan, could not have been made. He possessed but superficial knowledge upon any subject, and was totally ignorant in diplomatic affairs. His reputation had gone before him to Vienna, and his mission opened under the most unfavourable auspices. In want of money, and the House of Rohan being unable to make him any considerable advances, he obtained from his court a patent which authorised him to borrow the sum of 600,000 livres



## CARDINAL DE ROHAN,

upon his benefices, ran in debt above a million, and thought to dazzle the city and court of Vienna by the most indecent, and at the same time the most ill-judged extravagance. He formed a suite of eight or ten gentlemen of names sufficiently high-sounding, twelve pages equally well born, a crowd of officers and servants, a company of chamber musicians, &c. But this idle pomp did not last; embarrassment and distress soon showed themselves; his people, no longer receiving pay, in order to make money, abused the privileges of ambassadors, and smuggled<sup>1</sup> with so much effrontery, that Maria Theresa, to put a stop to it without offending the court of France, was compelled to suppress the privileges, in this respect, of all the diplomatic bodies,—a step which rendered the person and conduct of Prince Louis odious in every foreign court. He seldom obtained private audiences from the Empress, who did not esteem him, and who expressed herself without reserve upon his conduct, both as a bishop and as an ambassador.<sup>2</sup> He thought

<sup>1</sup> I have often heard the queen say, that in the office of the secretary of the Prince de Rohan, there were sold in one year at Vienna, more silk stockings than at Lyons and Paris together. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> This prelate, who was vain, light, and extravagant, had with him as counsellor and secretary to the embassy, a man of ability, adroit, cunning, well informed, and industrious: he was a Jesuit. The Abbé Georgel enjoyed the full confidence of the Prince de Rohan, and deserved it for his devotion and talent. A singular and romantic occurrence, which he himself has related in the somewhat long but often interesting memoirs he has left behind him, opened to him the secrets of the court of Vienna. This anecdote will be found among the Historical Illustrations: it belongs to the history of an embassy, which, however Madame Campan may treat of it, was perhaps undignified, but was not without address nor success in that kind of silent and underhand war waged by diplomatists (Note II, p. 265). We will add to it a paper (Note III, p. 269) worth perusal, on account of the information it affords respecting the means formerly employed at Vienna, London, Paris, in all courts, and particularly by

## CARDINAL DE ROHAN,

to obtain favour by assisting to effect the marriage of the Archduchess Elizabeth, the elder sister of Marie Antoinette, with Louis XV; an affair which was awkwardly undertaken, and which Madame du Barry had no difficulty in crushing. I have deemed it my duty to omit no particular of the moral and political character of a man whose existence was subsequently so fatal to the reputation of Marie Antoinette.

Louis XIV, Maria Theresa, and Louis XV, for hiring intelligent spies, corrupting the fidelity of clerks, detecting ciphers, and violating the secrecy of letters: means disgraceful, but useful, which probity disdains, at which governments blush, no doubt, and which they would do better in not using. *Note by the Editor.*

### CHAPTER III

A SUPERB pavilion had been prepared upon the frontiers near Kehl: it consisted of a vast saloon connected with two apartments, one of which was assigned to the lords and ladies of the court of Vienna, and the other to the suite of the dauphiness, composed of the Comtesse de Noailles,<sup>1</sup> her maid of honour; the Duchesse de Cossé, her tirewoman; four ladies of the palace; the Comte de Saulx-Tavannes, first gentleman usher; the Comte de Tessé, first equerry; the Bishop of Chartres, chief almoner; the officers of the body-guards, and the pages.

When the dauphiness had been entirely undressed, even to her body-linen and stockings, in order that she might retain nothing belonging to a foreign court (an etiquette always observed on such an occasion), the doors were opened; the young princess came forward, looking round for the Comtesse de Noailles; then, rushing into her arms, she implored her, with tears in her eyes, and with a heartfelt sincerity, to direct her, to advise her, and to be in every respect her guide and support. It was impossible to refrain from admiring her aerial gait: her smile was sufficient to win the heart; and in this enchanting being, in whom the splendour of French gaiety shone forth, an indescribable but august serenity — perhaps, also,

<sup>1</sup> [Anne Claude Laurence d'Arpajon, wife of the Comte de Noailles, who, in 1775, became Duc de Mouchy. She was lady of honour to the queens of Louis XV and Louis XVI. In 1794 she was guillotined with her husband.]

## COMTESSE DE NOAILLES

the somewhat proud position of her head and shoulders—betrayed a daughter of the Cæsars.

While doing justice to the virtues of the Comtesse de Noailles, those sincerely attached to the queen have always considered it one of the earliest misfortunes of the latter—perhaps even the greatest that she could experience on her entrance into the world—not to have found, in the person assigned to her for an adviser, a woman indulgent, enlightened, and administering good counsel with that sweetness which engages young persons to follow it. The Comtesse de Noailles had nothing agreeable in her appearance; her demeanour was stiff and her mien severe. She was perfect mistress of etiquette; but she wearied the young princess with it, without making her sensible of its importance. So much ceremony was indeed oppressive; but it was adopted upon the expediency of presenting the young princess to the French in such a manner as to command their respect; and especially of guarding her by an imposing barrier against the deadly shafts of calumny. It would have been proper to convince the dauphiness, that in France her dignity depended much upon customs by no means necessary at Vienna, to command the respect and love of the good and submissive Austrians towards the imperial family. The dauphiness was thus perpetually tormented by the remonstrances of the Comtesse de Noailles; and at the same time prompted by the Abbé de Vermond to ridicule both the lessons upon etiquette, and her who gave them. She pre-



## “MADAME L'ÉTIQUETTE”

ferred raillery to argument, and surnamed the Comtesse de Noailles, “Madame l'Étiquette.” This piece of humour gave rise to a presumption that as soon as the young princess could follow her own inclinations she would free herself from these formal customs.<sup>1</sup>

The entertainments which were given at Versailles on the marriage of the dauphin were remarkably splendid. The dauphiness arrived there in time for her toilet, after having slept at La Muette, where Louis XV had been to receive her; and where that prince, blinded by a feeling unworthy of a sovereign and the father of a family, caused the young princess, the royal family, and the ladies of the court, to sit down to supper with Madame du Barry.

The dauphiness was hurt at this conduct; she spoke of it openly enough to those with whom she was intimate; but she knew how to conceal her dissatis-

<sup>1</sup> The Comtesse de Noailles, the queen's lady of honour, possessed abundance of good qualities; piety, charity, and irreproachable morals rendered her worthy of reverence; but with all that was frivolous, which a limited mind could add even to the noblest qualifications, the countess was also abundantly provided. Etiquette was to her a kind of atmosphere: at the slightest derangement of the prescribed order of things it might be imagined that she was on the point of being suffocated. The queen required a lady of honour who would explain to her the origin of these forms; very inconvenient it must be confessed, but invented as a fence against malevolence. The custom of having maids of honour, and gentlemen ushers, and that of wearing hoops of three ells in circumference, were certainly invented to entrench all young princesses so respectably, that the malicious gaiety of the French, their proneness to insinuations, and too often to calumny, should not by any possibility find an opportunity to attack them.

The Comtesse de Noailles was incessantly teasing the queen with a thousand remonstrances, that she ought to have saluted this person in one way, and that person in another. All Paris knew that the queen had named her Madame l'Étiquette: according to their turn of mind, some approved of this nickname, and others condemned it; but all agreed that the young queen was disposed to free herself from wearisome ceremonies. *Note by Madame Cam-pan.*

## MARIE ANTOINETTE'S CHARMS

faction in public, and her behaviour showed no signs of it.<sup>1</sup>

She was received at Versailles in an apartment on the ground-floor, under that of the late queen, which was not prepared for her until six months after the day of her marriage.

The dauphiness, then fifteen years of age, beaming with freshness, appeared to all eyes more than beautiful. Her walk partook at once of the noble character of the princesses of her house, and of the graces of the French; her eyes were mild—her smile lovely. When she went to chapel, as soon as she had taken the first few steps in the long gallery, she discerned, all the way to its extremity, those persons whom she ought to salute with the consideration due to their rank; those on whom she should bestow an inclination of the head; and lastly those who were to be satisfied with a smile, while they read in her eyes a feeling of benevolence, calculated to console them for not being entitled to honours.

Louis XV was enchanted with the young dauphiness; all his conversation was about her graces, her vivacity, and the aptness of her repartees. She was yet more successful with the royal family, when they beheld her shorn of the splendour of the diamonds with which she had been adorned during the earliest days of her marriage. When clothed in a light dress of gauze or taffeta, she was compared to the

<sup>1</sup> [Wéber, who was Marie Antoinette's foster-brother, relates in his *Mémoires* (chap. i.), that Marie Antoinette behaved most discreetly to the king's mistress, and even replied to a questioner that she thought her charming.]

## MADAME DU BARRY'S JEALOUSY

Venus di Medici, and the Atalanta of the Marly gardens. Poets sang her charms, painters attempted to copy her features. An ingenious idea of one of the latter was rewarded by Louis XV. The painter's fancy had led him to place the portrait of Marie Antoinette in the heart of a full-blown rose.

The king continued to talk only of the dauphiness; and Madame du Barry ill-temperedly endeavoured to damp his enthusiasm. Whenever Marie Antoinette was the topic, she pointed out the irregularity of her features; criticised the *bons mots* quoted as hers; and rallied the king upon his prepossession in her favour. Madame du Barry was affronted at not receiving from the dauphiness those attentions to which she thought herself entitled; she did not conceal her vexation from the king; she was afraid that the grace and cheerfulness of the young princess would make the domestic circle of the royal family more agreeable to the old sovereign, and that he would escape her chains; at the same time hatred of the Choiseul party contributed powerfully to excite the enmity of the favourite.

It is known that the shameful elevation of Madame du Barry was the work of the anti-Choiseul party. The fall of that minister took place in November, 1770, six months after his long influence in the council had brought about the alliance with the House of Austria, and the arrival of Marie Antoinette at the court of France.

The princess, young, open, volatile, and inexpe-

## EARLY ACT OF GENEROSITY

rienced, found herself without any other guide than the Abbé de Vermond, in a court ruled by the enemy of the minister who had brought her there, and in the midst of people who hated Austria, and detested an alliance with the imperial house.

The Duc d'Aiguillon, the Duc de la Vauguyon, the Maréchal de Richelieu, the Rohans, and other considerable families who had made use of Madame du Barry to overthrow the duke, could not flatter themselves, notwithstanding their powerful intrigues, with a hope of being able to break off an alliance solemnly announced, and involving such high political interest. They therefore, without abandoning their projects, changed their mode of attack ; and it will be seen how the conduct of the dauphin served as a basis for their hopes.

The dauphiness continually gave proofs of both sense and feeling. Sometimes even she suffered herself to be carried away by those transports of compassionate kindness, which are not to be controlled, either by rank, or by the customs which it establishes.

In consequence of the fire in the Place Louis XV, which occurred at the time of the nuptial entertainments, the dauphin and dauphiness sent their whole income for the year to the relief of the unfortunate families who lost their relatives on that disastrous day.

This act of generosity is in itself of the number of those ostentatious kindnesses which are dictated by the policy of princes, at least, as much as by their com-



## DIAMONDS AND PEARLS

passion. But the grief of Marie Antoinette was genuine, and lasted several days; nothing could console her for the loss of so many innocent victims; she spoke of it weeping to her ladies, when one of them thinking, no doubt, to divert her mind, told her that a great number of thieves had been found among the bodies, and that their pockets were filled with watches and other valuables: "They have at least been well punished," added the person who related these particulars. "Oh! no, no, madame," replied the dauphiness, "they died by the side of honest people."

In passing through Rheims, on her way to Strasburg, she said, "That town is the one, of all France, which I hope not to see again for a long time."<sup>1</sup>

The dauphiness had brought from Vienna a considerable number of white diamonds: the king added to them the gift of the diamonds and pearls of the late dauphiness, and also put into her hands a collar of pearls, of a single row, the smallest of which was as large as a filbert, and which had been brought into France by Anne of Austria,<sup>2</sup> and appropriated by that princess to the use of the queens and dauphinesses of France.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The coronation of the French kings takes place in Rheims: so that when she should re-visit that city it would most probably be in consequence of the death of her father-in-law, Louis XV.

<sup>2</sup> [Anne of Austria, Queen of France (1601-1666), daughter of Philip III of Spain, was married in 1615 to Louis XIII, by whom she was treated with neglect. On the death of Louis in 1643 she became regent for her son, Louis XIV—then five years of age—during his minority.]

<sup>3</sup> I mention this collar thus particularly because the queen thought it her duty, notwithstanding this appropriation, to give it up to the commissaries of the National Assembly, when they came to strip the king and queen of the crown diamonds. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## THE PRIVATE KEY

The three princesses, daughters of Louis XV, joined in making her magnificent presents. Madame Adelaide at the same time gave the young princess a key of the private corridors of the castle; by means of which, without any suite, and without being perceived, she could get to the apartment of her aunts, and see them in private. The dauphiness, on receiving the key, told them, with infinite grace, that if they had meant to make her appreciate the superb presents they were kind enough to bestow upon her, they should not at the same time have offered her one of such inestimable value; for that to that key she should be indebted for an intimacy and advice unspeakably precious at her age. She did, indeed, make use of it very frequently; but Madame Victoire alone permitted her, as long as she continued dauphiness, to visit her familiarly. Madame Adelaide could not overcome her prejudices against Austrian princesses, and was wearied with the somewhat obtrusive gaiety of the dauphiness. Madame Victoire was concerned at this, feeling that their society and counsel would have been highly useful to a young person, otherwise likely to meet with none but parasites and flatterers. She endeavoured, therefore, to induce her to take pleasure in the society of the Marquise de Durfort, her maid of honour and favourite. Several agreeable entertainments took place at the house of this lady; but the Comtesse de Noailles and the Abbé de Vermond soon opposed these meetings.



*Madame Adelaide*





## COMPASSION FOR MISFORTUNE

A circumstance which happened in hunting, near the village of Achères, in the forest of Fontainebleau, afforded the young princess an opportunity of displaying her respect for old age, and her compassion for misfortune. A very old peasant was wounded by the stag; the dauphiness jumped out of her calash, placed the peasant, with his wife and children in it, had the family taken back to their cottage, and bestowed upon them every attention and every necessary assistance. Her heart was always open to the feelings of compassion; and, under such circumstances, the recollection of her rank never checked the effects of her sensibility. Several persons in her service entered her room one evening, expecting to find nobody there but the officer in waiting;<sup>1</sup> they perceived the young princess seated by the side of this man, who was considerably advanced in years; she had placed near him a bowl full of water; was stanching the blood which issued from a wound he had received in his hand, with her handkerchief which she had torn up to bind it, and was fulfilling towards him all the duties of a pious nun of the order of charity. The old man, affected even to tears, out of respect, left his august mistress to act as she thought proper. He had hurt himself in endeavouring to bring forward some rather heavy piece of furniture which the princess had asked him for.

In the month of July, 1770, an unfortunate occur-

<sup>1</sup> Ushers and grooms of the chamber were known at that time as officers of the interior. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## AN UNFORTUNATE OCCURRENCE

rence that took place in a family which the dauphiness honoured with her favour, contributed again to show not only her sensibility but also the justness of her ideas. One of her women had a son who was an officer in the gendarmes of the guard; this young man thought himself affronted by a clerk in the War Department, and imprudently sent him a formal challenge: he killed his adversary in the forest of Compiègne; the family of the young man who was killed, being in possession of the challenge, demanded justice. The king, distressed on account of several duels which had recently taken place, had unfortunately declared that he would show no mercy on the first event of that kind which could be proved; the culprit was therefore arrested. His mother, in all the agitation of the deepest grief, hastened to throw herself at the feet of the dauphiness, the dauphin, and the young princesses; after an hour's supplication they obtained from the king the favour so much desired. On the next day, a lady of rank who had certainly suffered herself to be prejudiced against the gendarme's mother, while congratulating the dauphiness, had the malice to add, that the mother had neglected no means of success on the occasion; that she had solicited not only the royal family, but even Madame du Barry. The dauphiness replied, that the fact justified the favourable opinion she had formed of the worthy woman; that the heart of a mother should hesitate at nothing for the salvation of her son; and that in her place, if she had thought it would be ser-

## STATE ENTRY INTO PARIS

viceable, she would have thrown herself at the feet of Zamora.<sup>1</sup>

Some time after the marriage entertainments, the dauphiness made her entry into Paris, and was received with transports of joy. After dining in the king's apartment at the Tuileries, she was forced, by the reiterated shouts of the multitude with which the garden was filled, to present herself upon the balcony fronting the principal walk. On seeing such a crowd of heads with their eyes fixed upon her she exclaimed, "Great God, what a concourse!" "Madame," said the old Duc de Brissac, the governor of Paris, "I may tell you, without fear of offending the dauphin, that they are so many lovers."<sup>2</sup> The dauphin took no umbrage at either acclamations or marks of homage of which the dauphiness was the object. The most mortifying indifference, a coldness which frequently degenerated into rudeness, were the sole feelings which the young prince then manifested towards her. Not all her charms could gain even upon his senses; he threw himself, as a matter of duty, upon the bed of the dauphiness, and often fell asleep without saying a single word to her. This coldness, which lasted a

<sup>1</sup> A little Indian, who carried the Comtesse du Barry's train. Louis XV often amused himself with the little marmoset; having facetiously made him governor of Luciennes, he received an annual income of 3000 francs. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> John Paul Timoléon de Cossé, Duc de Brissac and a marshal of France, the same who made the noble reply cited in our note at page 27 of this volume. At the courts of Louis XV and XVI, he was a model of the virtue, gallantry, and courage of the ancient knights. Comte de Charolais, finding him one day with his mistress, said to him abruptly, "Go out, sir." "My lord," replied the Duc de Brissac, with emphasis, "your ancestors would have said, 'Come out.'"<sup>3</sup> *Note by the Editor.*

## THE DAUPHIN'S INDIFFERENCE

long time, was said to be due to the work of the Duc de la Vauguyon. The dauphiness, in fact, had no sincere friends at court, except the Duc de Choiseul and his party. Will it be credited that the plans laid against Marie Antoinette aimed as far as a divorce? I have been assured of it by persons holding high situations at court, and many circumstances tend to confirm the opinion. On the journey to Fontainebleau, in the year of the marriage, the inspectors of public buildings were gained over to arrange that the apartment intended for the dauphin, communicating with that of the dauphiness, should not be finished; and a temporary apartment at the extremity of the building was assigned to him. The dauphiness, aware that this was the result of intrigue, had the courage to complain of it to Louis XV, who, after severe reprimands, gave orders so positive, that within the week the apartment was ready. Every method was tried to continue and augment the indifference which the dauphin long manifested towards his youthful spouse. She was deeply hurt at it, but she never suffered herself to utter the slightest complaint on the subject. Inattention to, even contempt for, the charms which she heard extolled on all sides, nothing induced her to break silence; and occasional tears, which would involuntarily burst from her eyes, were the sole symptoms of her inward sufferings discoverable by those in her service.

Once only, when tired out by the misplaced remonstrances of an old lady attached to her person,



## AT THE COURT OF LOUIS XV

who wished to dissuade her from riding on horseback, under the impression that it would prevent her producing heirs to the crown: "Mademoiselle," said she, "in God's name, do not tease me; be assured that I can put no heir in danger."

I thought it my duty to portray early in these memoirs, the obscure, though ambitious man who guided Marie Antoinette from her infancy down to the fatal epoch of the Revolution.

I have given the character of the dauphiness's maid of honour; I have noticed some particulars of the prejudice of Madame Adelaide, the eldest daughter of Louis XV, against the House of Austria; I have spoken of the great kindness of the second princess, Madame Victoire, and of her affection for Marie Antoinette; and lastly, I have sketched the character of Madame Sophie, the king's third daughter, who did not afford to her niece, even to the extent which her sisters did, the useful resources of society.

The dauphiness found at the court of Louis XV besides the three princesses, the king's daughters, the princes, also, brothers of the dauphin, who were receiving their education; and the ladies Clotilde and Elizabeth, still in the care of Madame de Marsan, governess of the children of France. The elder of the two latter princesses, in 1777, married the Prince of Piedmont, afterwards King of Sardinia. This princess was in her infancy so extremely large that the people nicknamed her *grosse madame*.<sup>1</sup> The second princess

<sup>1</sup> Madame Clotilde of France, a sister of the king, was in fact extraordi-

## MADAME ELIZABETH

was the pious Elizabeth, the victim of her respect and tender attachment for the king, her brother, and whose exalted virtues have deserved a celestial crown.<sup>1</sup> She was still scarcely out of her leading-strings at the period of the dauphin's marriage. The dauphiness gave her a marked preference. The governess, who sought to advance that one of the two princesses whom nature had least favourably dealt

rily fat for her height and age. One of her playfellows having been indiscreet enough even in her presence to make use of the nickname given to her, immediately received a severe reprimand from the Comtesse de Marsan, who hinted to her that she would do well in not making her appearance again before the princess. Madame Clotilde sent for her the next day: "My governess," said she, "has done her duty, and I will do mine; come and see us as usual, and think no more of a piece of inadvertence which I myself have forgotten."

This princess, so encumbered with body, possessed the most agreeable and playful wit. Her affability and prepossessing grace rendered her dear to all who came near her. A certain poet, whose mind was solely occupied with the prodigious size of Madame Clotilde, when it was determined that she should marry the Prince of Piedmont, composed the following stanza.

To understand the humour, or rather the meaning of it, it must be remembered that two princesses of Savoy had just married two French princes.

*"Though we've only return'd one princess for the two,  
Who from Piedmont was sent us of late;  
Yet surely no question of wrong can ensue,  
Since the bargain's made up by her weight."*

*Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Philippine Marie Hélène of France was born at Versailles on the 3d of May, 1764. "Madame Elizabeth," says M. de Salle, the author of a biographical article upon this interesting and unfortunate princess, "had not, like Madame Clotilde, her sister, received from nature that softness and flexibility of character which renders the practice of virtue easy; she evinced more than one mark of resemblance to the Duke of Burgundy, the pupil of Fénelon. Education and piety operated upon her as they did upon that prince: the precepts and examples which surrounded her, adorned her with all good qualities, with all virtues, and left her nothing of her original inclinations, but amiable sensibility, lively impressions, and a firmness which seemed formed to meet the dreadful trials for which heaven reserved her."

We shall have occasion more than once in the course of these Memoirs to observe her constant friendship, her affecting resignation, her sublime self-devotion, and her angelic sweetness, to the very moment in which she manifested the calm and heroic courage of a martyr. *Note by the Editor.*

## DISSENSIONS AND INTRIGUES

by, was offended at the dauphiness's partiality for Madame Elizabeth, and by her injudicious complaints weakened the friendship which yet subsisted between Madame Clotilde and Marie Antoinette. There even arose some degree of rivalry upon the subject of education; and that which the Empress Maria Theresa had bestowed upon her daughters was talked of openly and unfavourably enough. The Abbé de Vermond thought himself affronted, took a part in the quarrel, and added his complaints and jokes to those of the dauphiness, upon the criticisms of the governess; he even indulged himself, in his turn, in reflections upon the tuition of Madame Clotilde. Everything transpires at court. Madame de Marsan was informed of all that had been said in the dauphiness's circle, and was very angry with her on account of it. From that moment a party of intrigue, or rather of gossip against Marie Antoinette, was established round Madame de Marsan's fireside; her most trifling actions were there construed into ill; her gaiety, and the harmless amusements in which she sometimes indulged in her own apartments with the more youthful ladies of her train, and even with the women in her service, were stigmatised as criminal. Prince Louis de Rohan, sent as ambassador to Vienna by this society, was the echo there of these unmerited comments, and entangled himself in a series of culpable accusations which he dignified with the name of zeal. He incessantly represented the young dauphiness as alienating all hearts by levities unsuitable

## FAMILY DISSENSIONS

to the dignity of the French court. The princess frequently received from the court of Vienna remonstrances, of the origin of which she could not long remain in ignorance. From this period that aversion which she never ceased to manifest for the Prince de Rohan, must be dated.

About the same time the dauphiness gained information of a letter written by Prince Louis to the Duc d'Aiguillon, in which the ambassador expressed himself in very unfit terms respecting the intentions of Maria Theresa with relation to the partition of Poland. This letter of Prince Louis had been read at the Comtesse du Barry's;<sup>1</sup> the levity of the ambassador's correspondence wounded the feelings and the dignity of the dauphiness at Versailles, while at Vienna the representations which he made to Maria Theresa against the young princess terminated in rendering the motives of his incessant complaints suspected by the empress.

Maria Theresa at length determined on sending her private secretary, Baron de Neni, to Versailles, with directions to observe the conduct of the dauphiness with attention, and form a just estimate of the opinion of the court, and of Paris, with regard to that princess. The Baron de Neni, after having devoted sufficient time and attention to the subject, undeceived his sovereign as to the exaggerations of the French ambassador; and the empress had no difficulty in de-

<sup>1</sup> For further details relating to this anecdote, see Wéber's *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 504.



## FAMILY DISSENSIONS

teeting among the calumnies which his effrontery had conveyed to her under the specious name of anxiety for her august daughter, proofs of the enmity of a party which had never approved of the alliance of the House of Bourbon with her own.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Empress Maria Theresa knew very well which of the persons who composed the court of Louis XV were favourable, and which unfavourable to Marie Antoinette. It is said, that at the moment of the princess's departure for France, the empress gave her the following note in her own handwriting:

*"List of Persons of my Acquaintance.*

" Duc & Duchesse de Choiseul.	D'Aubeterre.	M. Blondel.
Duc & Duchesse de Praslin.	Comte de Broglie.	La Beauvau, a nun.
Hautefort.	Brothers de Montazet.	Her companion.
The Du Châtelets.	M. d'Aumont.	The Durforts.
D'Estrées.	M. Gérard.	

"To this last family you will take every opportunity to show gratitude and attention.

"The same to the Abbé Vermond: I have the welfare of these persons at heart. My ambassador has orders to promote it. I shall be sorry to be the first to violate my own principle, which is to recommend nobody; but you and I owe too much to these persons not to seek all opportunities of being serviceable to them, if we can do it without too much *impiegno*.

"Consult with Mercy. I recommend to you in general all the Lorraines in whatever you can do for them."\*

The existence of this list is not an impossibility. A curious fact related by the Abbé Georgel, in his *Memoirs*, makes it likely: but it must not be forgotten that Georgel, notwithstanding his apparent moderation, was one of the most dangerous enemies of Marie Antoinette. Of this we warn the reader.

Georgel, the secretary of the French embassy in Austria, obtained, by means of a mysterious unknown person, as may have been observed on reading *Historical Illustrations*, Note II, page 265, the most important secrets of the court of Vienna.

"The masked man," says he, "one day placed in my hands two papers of secret instructions sent to Comte de Mercy, for him to give personally to the queen. The first for the king's inspection; the second for the queen alone. The latter contained advice as to the method to be adopted for compensating for the king's inexperience, and for profiting by the weakness of his character, to influence the government without appearing to interfere with it. The political lesson was given to Marie Antoinette with much art: she was led to feel that it was the surest way to render herself beloved by the French, whose happiness she might thereby secure; and at the same time cement the union of the two houses of Austria and Bourbon."

What Georgel insinuates is obvious, and if the court of Vienna be skilful in instruction, so is the abbé in his hatred. *Note by the Editor.*

\* Some details relative to this list will be found in the *Historical Illustrations* (Note IV, p. 275).

## CARDINAL DE ROHAN'S CONDUCT

At this period the dauphiness, yet unable to obtain any influence over the heart of her husband, dreading Louis XV, justly mistrusting everything connected with Madame du Barry and the Duc d'Aiguillon, had not deserved the slightest reproach as to that sort of levity which hatred and her misfortunes afterwards construed into crime. The empress, convinced of the innocence of Marie Antoinette, directed the Baron de Neni to solicit the recall of the Prince de Rohan, and to inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs of all the motives which made her require it; but the House of Rohan interposed between its *protégé* and the Austrian envoy, and an evasive answer merely, was given.

It was not until two months after the death of Louis XV that the court of Vienna obtained his recall. The avowed grounds for requiring it were first, the public gallantries of Prince Louis with women of the court and others of less distinction; secondly, his surliness and haughtiness towards other foreign ministers, which would have had more serious consequences, especially with the ministers of England and Denmark, if the empress herself had not interfered; thirdly, his contempt for religion in a country where it was particularly necessary to show respect for it. He had been seen frequently to dress himself in clothes of different colours, assuming the hunting uniforms of various noblemen whom he visited, with so much publicity, that one day in particular, during the Fête Dieu, he and all his legation in green uniforms, laced with gold, broke through a procession which impeded

## TWO SARDINIAN BRIDES

them, in order to make their way to a hunting party at the Prince de Paar's; and fourthly, the immense debts contracted by him and his people, which were tardily and only in part discharged.<sup>1</sup>

The succeeding marriages of the Comte de Provence and Comte d'Artois with two daughters of the King of Sardinia,<sup>2</sup> increasing the number of princesses of the same age as Marie Antoinette at Versailles, procured society for the dauphiness more suitable to her age, and altered her mode of life. A pair of tolerably fine eyes drew forth in favour of the Comtesse de Provence upon her arrival at Versailles, the only praises which could reasonably be bestowed upon her.

The Comtesse d'Artois, though not deformed, was very small; she had a fine complexion; her face, tolerably pleasing, was not remarkable for anything except the extreme length of the nose. But being good and generous she was beloved by those about her, and even possessed some weight, as long as she was the only one who had produced heirs to the crown.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See among the Historical Illustrations (Note V, p. 274) the details given by the Abbé Georgel, secretary of the embassy to Vienna, on the recall of the cardinal. *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> [(1) Louise Marie Joséphine of Savoy, daughter of Victor Amadeus III, King of Sardinia, married in 1771 the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII. She died in 1810.

(2) Marie Thérèse of Savoy, sister of the above, married in 1773 the Comte d'Artois, afterwards Charles X of France. She died in 1805.]

<sup>3</sup> "Madame d'Artois," says a work of that period, "has made her entry into Paris. The equipages were superb, and as tasteful as rich; she went according to custom to return thanks in the Church of Saint Geneviève. The princess possesses a highly interesting physiognomy, and her skin is extremely fair. She was beheld with that pleasure which arises from feeling; on her side she appeared affected by the applause lavished upon her." (*Secret Correspondence of the Court of Louis XVI.*) *Note by the Editor.*



## THE COURT *EN FAMILLE*

From this time the closest intimacy subsisted between the three young families. They took their meals together, except only on those days when they dined in public. This manner of living *en famille* continued until the queen sometimes indulged herself in going to dine with the Duchesse de Polignac, when she was governess; but the evening meetings at supper were never interrupted; they took place at the house of the Comtesse de Provence. Madame Elizabeth made one of the party when she had finished her education, and sometimes Mesdames, the king's aunts, were invited. This custom, which had no precedent at court, was the work of Marie Antoinette, and she maintained it with the utmost perseverance.

The court of Versailles saw no change in point of etiquette during the reign of Louis XV. Play took place at the house of the dauphiness, as being the first lady of the state. It had, from the death of Queen Marie Leczinska to the marriage of the dauphin, been held at the abode of Madame Adelaide. This removal, the result of an order of precedence not to be violated, was not the less displeasing to Madame Adelaide, who established a separate party for play in her apartments, and scarcely ever went to that which not only the court in general, but also the royal family, were expected to attend. The full-dress visits to the king on his *débotter* were still continued. High mass was attended daily. The airings of the princesses were nothing more than rapid races



*Madame Tictore*





## AMATEUR THEATRICALS

in berlines, during which they were accompanied by body-guards, gentlemen ushers, and pages on horse-back. They generally galloped some leagues from Versailles. Calashes were used only in hunting.

The young princesses were desirous to infuse animation into their circle of associates by something useful as well as pleasant. They agreed to learn and perform all the best plays of the French theatre; the dauphin was the only spectator; the three princesses, the two brothers of the king, and Messrs. Campan, father and son, were the sole performers; but they made it of the utmost importance to keep this amusement as secret as an affair of state: they dreaded the censure of the king's aunts; and they had no doubt that Louis XV would forbid such pastimes if he knew of their existence. They selected a retired room which nobody had occasion to enter, for their performance. A kind of proscenium, which could be taken down, and shut up in a closet, formed the stage. The Comte de Provence always knew his part so well as to be quite at ease; the Comte d'Artois knew his tolerably well, and recited elegantly: the princesses performed very indifferently. The dauphiness acquitted herself in some characters with discrimination and feeling. The chief pleasure of this amusement consisted in their having all the costumes elegant and accurate. The dauphin entered into the spirit of the diversions of the young family, laughed heartily at the comic characters as they came on the scene, and from these amusements may be dated his discontinu-

## AMATEUR THEATRICALS

ance of the timid manner of his youth, and his taking pleasure in the society of the dauphiness.

A wish to extend the list of pieces for performance, and the certainty that these diversions would remain secret, had procured my father-in-law and my husband the honour of showing off among the princes.

It was not till a long time afterwards that I learned these particulars, M. Campan having kept the secret; but an unforeseen event had well-nigh exposed the whole mystery. One day the queen desired M. Campan to go down into her closet to fetch something she had forgotten; he was dressed for the character of Crispin,<sup>1</sup> and was rouged; a private staircase led direct to the theatre through the dressing-room. M. Campan fancied he heard some noise, and remained still behind the door, which was shut. A servant belonging to the wardrobe, who was, in fact, on the staircase, had also heard some noise; and, either from fear or curiosity, he suddenly opened the door; the figure of Crispin frightened him so, that he fell down backwards, shouting with all his might, "Help! help!" My father-in-law raised him up, made him recognise his voice, and laid upon him an injunction of silence as to what he had seen. He felt himself, however, bound to inform the dauphiness of what had happened; and she was afraid that another similar occurrence might betray their amusements: they were therefore discontinued.

<sup>1</sup> [In *Crispin, Rival de son Maître*—a comedy by Le Sage, produced in 1707.]



## THE DAUPHINESS' POPULARITY

The princess occupied her time in her own apartment in the study of music and the parts in plays which she had to learn: the latter exercise, at least, produced the beneficial effect of strengthening her memory and familiarising her with the French language.

The Abbé de Vermond visited her daily, but took care to avoid the imposing tone of a governor; and would not, even as reader, recommend the study of history. I believe he never read a single volume of history in his life to his august pupil: and, in truth, there never existed a princess who manifested a more marked aversion for all serious study.

While Louis XV reigned, the enemies of Marie Antoinette made no attempt to change public opinion with regard to her. She always was the object of the wishes and love of the French people in general, and particularly of the inhabitants of Paris; who, being deprived of the pleasure of possessing her within their city, went, at all opportunities, to Versailles—the majority of them attracted solely by the pleasure of seeing her. The courtiers did not fully enter into the truly popular enthusiasm which the dauphiness had inspired: the disgrace of the Duc de Choiseul had removed her real support from her; and the party which had continued in power since the exile of that minister was, politically, as much opposed to her family as to herself. The dauphiness was, therefore, surrounded by enemies at Versailles.

Nevertheless, everybody appeared outwardly de-

## *COURTIERS' SAGACITY WARNED*

sirous to please her: the age of Louis XV, and the character of the dauphin, sufficiently warned the long-sighted sagacity of the courtiers, of the important part reserved for the princess under the following reign, in case the dauphin should become attached to her.

## CHAPTER IV

**A**BOUT the beginning of May, 1774, Louis XV, the strength of whose constitution had promised a protracted life, was attacked by a confluent smallpox of the worst kind. The king's daughters at this juncture inspired the dauphiness with a feeling of respect and attachment, of which she gave them repeated proofs when she ascended the throne. In fact, nothing was more admirable or more affecting than the courage with which they braved that most horrible disease: the air of the palace was infected: more than fifty persons took smallpox in consequence of having merely crossed the gallery of Versailles; and ten died of it.

The end of the monarch was approaching. His reign, peaceful in general, had preserved a degree of strength imparted to it by the power of his predecessor: on the other hand, his own weakness had been preparing the misfortunes of whoever should reign after him. The scene was about to change: hope, ambition, joy, grief, and all those feelings which variously affected the hearts of the courtiers, sought in vain to disguise themselves under a calm exterior. It was easy to detect the different motives which induced them all, every moment, to repeat the question "How is the king?" At length, on the 10th of May, 1774, the mortal career of Louis XV terminated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As soon as Louis XV knew with what disorder he was affected, he despaired

## DEATH OF LOUIS XV

The Comtesse du Barry had, a few days previously, withdrawn to Ruelle, to the Duc d'Aiguillon's: twelve or fifteen persons belonging to the court thought it their duty to visit her there; their liveries were observed; and these visits were for a long time grounds for dislike. More than six years after the king's death, one of those persons being spoken of in the circle of the royal family, I heard it remarked, "That was one of the fifteen Ruelle carriages."

The whole court went to the castle; the *Œil de Bœuf*<sup>1</sup> was filled with courtiers, and the whole palace with the inquisitive. The dauphin had settled that he would leave it with the royal family, the moment the king should breathe his last sigh. But upon such an occasion decency forbade that positive orders for departure should be passed from mouth to mouth. The keepers of the stables, therefore, agreed with the people who were in the king's room, that the latter should place a lighted taper near a window, and that

of recovery. "I do not intend," said he, "that the drama of Metz should be re-acted:" and he ordered that Madame du Barry should be sent away. But the friends of the favourite had not yet given up the game. The two parties which divided the court attacked each other warmly at the foot of the bed whereon Louis XV was extended. They fought, it may be said, about the last sighs and doubtful commands of a dying man. Louis XV had religious duties to perform. The moment for them, which one party was anxious to hasten, and the other had an interest in delaying, occasioned the most scandalous scenes. What the Abbé Soulavie says of it is doubtless not all true. For instance, it is difficult to attribute to the rigid Christopher de Beaumont any other motives than his strict principles, fervent piety, and the consciousness of the sacred obligations which he had to discharge. But, on the other hand, all is not false; and it is not to be doubted that Soulavie has related a considerable number of precise particulars, when we compare his narrative, which we give in our *Historical Illustrations* (Note VI, p. 275), with the picture of the same occurrences drawn by Baron de Besenval in his *Memoirs*. *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> A large waiting-room at Versailles lighted by a bull's-eye window.



## HOMAGE TO THE NEW POWER

at the instant of the king's decease one of them should extinguish it.

The taper was extinguished. On this signal, the body-guards, pages, and equerries, mounted on horseback, and all was ready for setting off. The dauphin was with the dauphiness. They were expecting together the intelligence of the death of Louis XV. A dreadful noise, absolutely like thunder, was heard in the outer apartment: it was the crowd of courtiers who were deserting the dead sovereign's antechamber, to come and bow to the new power of Louis XVI. This extraordinary tumult informed Marie Antoinette and her husband that they were to reign; and, by a spontaneous movement, which deeply affected those around them, they threw themselves on their knees; both pouring forth a flood of tears, and exclaiming, "O God, guide us, protect us, we are too young to govern."

The Comtesse de Noailles entered, and was the first to salute Marie Antoinette as Queen of France. She requested their Majesties would condescend to quit the inner apartments for the grand saloon, to receive the princes and all the great officers, who were desirous to do homage to their new sovereigns. Marie Antoinette received these first visits leaning upon her husband, her handkerchief held to her eyes, and in the most affecting attitude: the carriages drove up, the guards and officers were on horseback. The castle was deserted—everyone hastened to fly from a contagion, to brave which no inducement now remained.

## THE COURT REMOVES TO CHOISY

On leaving the chamber of Louis XV, the Duc de Villequier, first gentleman of the bed-chamber, ordered M. Andouillé, the king's chief surgeon, to open the body and embalm it. The chief surgeon must necessarily have died in consequence. "I am ready," replied Andouillé;—"but while I operate you shall hold the head: your office imposes this duty upon you." The duke went off without saying a word, and the corpse was neither opened nor embalmed. A few under-servants and poor workmen continued with the pestiferous remains, and paid the last duty to their master: the surgeons directed that spirits of wine should be poured into the coffin.

The whole of the court set off for Choisy, at four o'clock;—Mesdames, the king's aunts, in their private carriage; and the princesses under tuition, with the Comtesse de Marsan and their sub-governesses. The king, the queen, Monsieur, the king's brother, Madame, and the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, went in the same carriage. The solemn scene that had just passed before their eyes; the multiplied ideas offered to their imaginations by that which was just opening; had naturally inclined them to grief and reflection: but, by the queen's own confession, this inclination, little suited to their time of life, wholly left them before they had gone half of their journey: a word, drolly mangled by the Comtesse d'Artois, occasioned a general burst of laughter; and from that moment they dried their tears. The communication between Choisy and Paris became incessant: never was a court

## APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS

seen in greater agitation. What influence will the royal aunts have?—And the queen?—What fate is reserved for the Comtesse du Barry?—Whom will the young king choose for his ministers?—All these questions were answered in a few days. It was determined that the king's youth required him to have a confidential person near him; and that there should be a Prime Minister. All eyes were turned upon Messieurs de Machault<sup>1</sup> and de Maurepas,<sup>2</sup> both of them much advanced in years. The first had retired to his estate near Paris; and the second to Pont Chartrain, to which place he had long been exiled. The letter for the summons of M. de Machault was written, when Madame Adelaide obtained the preference of that important appointment for M. de Maurepas. The page to whose care the first letter had been actually consigned, was recalled.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Jean Baptiste de Machault (1701–1794) was appointed Comptroller-General of the Finances in 1745, and Keeper of the Seals in 1750. He gained the enmity of Madame de Pompadour, and in 1754 was deprived of his post as Comptroller-General, but was made Minister of Marine. In 1757 he was dismissed from office, when he retired to his estate at d'Arnouville.]

<sup>2</sup> [Jean Frédéric Phélypeaux, Comte de Maurepas (1701–1781), French statesman, was made Secretary of State in 1715, and Minister of Marine in 1725. For offending Madame de Pompadour by an epigram, he was banished from court for twenty-five years. His most popular measure after his return to office on the accession of Louis XVI was the restoration of the Parliaments.]

<sup>3</sup> This fact has been doubted: but I am able to assert that Louis XVI desired M. Campan to recall the page, whom he found ready to mount his horse, and whom he desired to come back again, to return the letter to the king himself; and that the queen said upon the subject to my father-in-law, "If the letter had gone, M. de Machault would have been Prime Minister; for the king would never have consented to write a second letter in contradiction of his first intention."\* *Note by Madame Campan.*

\* If we may credit a contemporary writer, the Abbé de Radonvilliers was not without influence in this latter determination. The secret motives which prompted the king's old preceptor maybe seen at Note VII, p. 280. Chamfort relates the following anecdote upon the subject of the nomination of the Comte de Maurepas:

"It is a known fact that the king's letter, sent to M. de Maurepas, was written for M. de Machault. What particular interest changed this disposition is known; but that which



## APPOINTMENT OF MINISTERS

The Duc d'Aiguillon had been too openly known as the private friend of the late king's mistress; he was dismissed. M. de Vergennes,<sup>1</sup> at that time ambassador of France, at Stockholm, was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs; Comte du Muy, the intimate friend of the dauphin, the father of Louis XVI, obtained the War Department. The Abbé Terray in vain said and wrote, that he had boldly done all possible injury to the creditors of the State during the reign of the late king; that order was restored in the finances, and that nothing but what was beneficial to all parties remained to be done; and that the new court was about to enjoy the advantages of the regenerating part of his plan of finance: all these reasons, set forth in five or six memorials, which he sent in succession to the King and Queen, did not prevail to keep him in office. His talents were admitted; but the odium which his operations had unavoidably brought upon his character, combined with the immorality of his private life, forbade his further stay at court: he was succeeded by M. de Clugny.<sup>2</sup> De

<sup>1</sup> [Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes (1717-1787), Minister for Foreign Affairs under Louis XVI in 1774. He signed a treaty with the United States in 1778, which involved France in a war against England. This was ended by the Treaty of Versailles in 1783.]

<sup>2</sup> We find in a work of the times, an anecdote upon the subject of the appointment of M. de Clugny, which we give without disputing it, though without taking upon ourselves to vouch for its veracity. "Speculators imagine they perceive in M. de Clugny's elevation, the dawn of success for that party, which

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is not known, is, that M. de Maurepas pilfered, as it were, the place which it is supposed was offered to him. The king would do no more than chat with him. At the end of the conversation, M. de Maurepas said to him: 'I will detail my ideas to-morrow at the council.' It is related, too, that at this conversation he said to the king, 'Your Majesty then makes me Prime Minister?' 'No,' replied the king, 'I have no such intention.' 'I understand,' said M. de Maurepas, 'your Majesty wishes I should teach you to do without one.'" Note by the Editor.





*Madame du Barry*



## MADAME DU BARRY'S RETIREMENT

Maupeou, the Chancellor, was banished; this gave universal satisfaction; lastly, the re-assembling of the parliaments produced the strongest sensation:<sup>1</sup> Paris was in a delirium of joy, and not more than one person in a hundred foresaw, that the spirit of the ancient magistracy would be still the same; and that in a short time it would make new attempts upon the royal authority. Madame du Barry had been ordered to retire to Pont-aux-Dames. This was a measure rather of necessity than of severity: a short period of compulsory retreat was requisite, in order completely to break off her connection with state affairs.

The possession of Luciennes and a considerable

is endeavouring to restore M. de Choiseul to the administration. It seems, however, that the efforts of the party will be unavailing. M. de Maurepas, who is informed of all that passes, has concerted with the King a plan for discovering the mainspring of the intrigue being carried on for the purpose of effecting his downfall. He is gone to Pont Chartrain, after forewarning the monarch of all the steps towards that object, which might be taken in his absence. Twice a day did the Mentor receive a courier from his master, who informed him of all that was done and said with the intention before alluded to. One day the King apprised him, that an English newspaper had been brought to him in which it was said, that if the Duc de Choiseul were named Prime Minister, as it appeared he would be, France would become more powerful alone, than all the powers of Europe combined. On the day of M. de Maurepas's return, the King said before the whole court, 'I understand that M. de Choiseul is in Paris; why is he not at Chanteloup? For any man who is fortunate enough to possess an estate, this is the season for enjoying it.' All the duke's friends were dumb, and the next day he himself left Paris." (*Secret Correspondence of the Court*, vol. iii, p. 10.) *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> [De Maupeou, at the close of 1770, and early in 1771, advised Louis XV to take summary action against the Parliament of Paris, which had on many occasions factiously opposed the royal prerogative. Its members were banished, as also those of nearly all the twelve provincial Parliaments. In their place Louis XV and Maupeou instituted at Paris a provisional Parliament and *Conseil Supérieur* at the twelve provincial centres. These bodies were subservient to the monarchy, but earned the contempt of nobles, philosophers, and the populace. In recalling the old Parliaments, Louis XVI should have imposed safeguards against their factious interference with purely administrative affairs; on which see H. Carré, *La Fin des Parlements* (1778-1780), A. Young, *Travels in France* (Bohn edit.), p. 321.]

## QUEEN AND DUC DE CHOISEUL

pension were continued to her.<sup>1</sup> Everybody expected the recall of M. de Choiseul; the regret occasioned by his absence among the numerous friends whom he had left at court, the attachment of a young princess, who was indebted to him for her elevation to the throne of France, and all concurring circumstances seemed to foretell his return: the Queen entreated it of the King with the liveliest importunities, but she met with an insurmountable obstacle, and one which she had not foreseen. The King, it is said, had imbibed the strongest prejudices against that minister,<sup>2</sup> from secret Memoirs penned by his father, and which had been committed to the care of the Duc de la Vauguyon, with an injunction to place them in his hands as soon as he should be old enough to study the art of governing.<sup>3</sup> It was by these Memoirs, that

<sup>1</sup> The Comtesse du Barry never forgot the mild treatment she experienced from the court of Louis XVI; during the most violent convulsions of the Revolution, she signified to the Queen that there was not in all France a female more grieved at the sufferings of her sovereign than herself; that the honour she had for years enjoyed, of living near the throne, and the unbounded kindness of the King and Queen, had so sincerely attached her to the cause of royalty, that she entreated the Queen to honour her by disposing of all she possessed. Though they did not accept her offer, their Majesties were affected by her gratitude. The Comtesse du Barry was, as is well known, one of the victims of the Revolution. She betrayed the lowest degree of weakness, and the most ardent desire to live. She was the only woman who wept upon the scaffold, and implored for mercy. Her beauty and tears made an impression on the populace, and the execution was hurried to a conclusion. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> These prejudices did not arise from the pretended crime, of which slander had accused this minister; but principally from the suppression of the Jesuits, in which he had in fact taken an active part. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>3</sup> It would be difficult to raise a doubt about the existence of these Memoirs, or rather these instructions, drawn up by the dauphin, for the guidance of his children. That prince was surrounded by men whose character he had studied, whose principles he approved, and whose attachment he had ascertained: it appears natural in him to have recommended them to his successor. One writer asserts, that he had the list of them in his possession. We give it with the



## THE ABBÉ AND M. CAMPAN

the esteem which he had conceived for Maréchal du Muy was inspired, and we may add that Madame Adelaide, who at this early period powerfully influenced the decisions of the young monarch, confirmed the impressions they had made.

The Queen conversed with M. Campan on the regret she felt at being unable to contribute to the recall of M. de Choiseul, and disclosed the cause of it to him. The Abbé de Vermond who, down to the time of the death of Louis XV, had been on terms of the strictest friendship with M. Campan, called upon him on the second day after the arrival of the court at Choisy, and, assuming a serious and austere air, said, "Sir, the Queen was indiscreet enough yesterday, to speak to you of a minister, to whom she must of course be attached, and whom his friends ardently desire to have near her; you are aware that we must give up all expectation of seeing the duke at court; you know the reasons why; but you do not know that the young Queen having mentioned the conversation in question to me, it was my duty, both as her preceptor and her friend, to remonstrate most sharply with her, on her indiscretion in communicating to you those particulars which you are in possession of. I am now come to tell you, that if you continue to avail yourself of the good nature of your mistress to intrude yourself into secrets of state,

notes accompanying it, and which will probably be received as true, when read with a recollection of the progress made by several of the persons to whom they relate, in the confidence, and at the court of Louis XVI. See the Historical Illustrations, under Note VIII, p. 282. *Note by the Editor.*

## THE QUEEN AND M. CAMPAN

you will have me for your most inveterate enemy. The Queen should find here no other confidant than myself, respecting things that ought to remain secret.”<sup>1</sup> M. Campan answered, that he did not covet the important and dangerous character at the new court, which the abbé appropriated to himself; and that he should confine himself to the duties of his office, being sufficiently satisfied with the continued kindness with which the Queen honoured him to desire nothing more. Notwithstanding this, however, he informed the Queen, on the very same evening, of the injunction he had received. She owned that she had mentioned their conversation to the abbé; that he had indeed seriously reproved her, in order to make her feel the necessity of being secret in concerns of business; and she added: “The abbé cannot like you, my dear Campan; he did not expect that I should, on my arrival in France, find in my household, a man who would suit me so exactly as you have done.”<sup>2</sup> I know that he has taken umbrage at it;

<sup>1</sup> The Abbé de Vermond was not blamable for preventing the Queen talking to one of her servants about matters of importance; but he was so, for saying that he himself ought to be the depositary of the most momentous secrets. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé de Vermond was indeed not aware that the young princess would find in her household a well-informed man, capable of amusing her, by interesting and lively anecdotes of the courts of Louis XV the Regent, and even of Louis XIV. The abbé had taken pains at Vienna to prepossess the dauphiness against M. Moreau, an aged advocate in the councils, and historiographer of France, whose talents had promoted him to the office of librarian to her. On the day after the arrival of the dauphiness at Versailles, the Comtesse de Noailles asked her what orders she had to give for M. Moreau. She replied, that the only order she had for him was to give up the key of her library to M. Campan, whom she installed into his office; adding that he might retain the title which the King had conferred upon him, but that she did not accept of his services. Her *dame d'honneur* exclaimed against this determination, and spoke very

## THE ABBÉ SOLE CONFIDANT

that is enough: I know too, that you are incapable of attempting anything to injure him in my esteem; an attempt which would be vain, for I have been too long attached to him. As to yourself, be easy on the score of the abbé's hostility, which shall not in any way hurt you. We run the risk of doing unjust actions only when the persons about us possess the treacherous art of disguising the motives of hatred or ambition by which they are prompted." The Abbé de Vermond having made himself master of the office of sole confidant of the Queen, was nevertheless agitated whenever he saw the young monarch. The latter could not be ignorant that the abbé had been promoted by the Duc de Choiseul, and was believed to favour the Encyclopædists, against whom Louis XV entertained a latent prejudice, although he suffered them to gain so great an ascendancy during his reign. The abbé therefore guessed that he could not stand very well with the King. He had moreover observed that never, while dauphin, had that prince addressed a single word to him; and that he very frequently answered him only with a shrug of the shoulders. He therefore determined on writing to Louis XVI, and intimated that he owed his situation at court solely to the confidence with which the

highly of M. Moreau's talents; but the princess was so prejudiced against him that she insisted upon the execution of her order, and added that she would speak to the King about the matter; that she knew M. Moreau had a double share of talent, and that she desired to have no people about her but those on whom she could rely. It is probable that the dauphiness had been informed of the connection of M. Moreau with the Duc d'Aiguillon, and some members of that minister's party. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## CONJUGAL INTIMACY

late King had honoured him; and that as habits contracted during the Queen's education placed him continually in the closest intimacy with her, he could not enjoy the honour of remaining near her Majesty without the King's consent. Louis XVI sent back his letter, after writing upon it these words: "I permit the Abbé de Vermond to continue his office about the Queen."

Although at the period of his grandfather's death Louis XVI had not enjoyed the marital rites, he began to be exceedingly attached to the Queen. The first period of so deep a mourning not admitting of indulgence in the diversion of hunting, he proposed to her walks in the gardens of Choisy: they went out like husband and wife, the young King giving his arm to the Queen, and accompanied by a very small suite. The influence of this example had such an effect upon the courtiers, that the next day several couples, who had long, and for good reasons, been disunited, were, to the amusement of the whole court, seen walking upon the terrace with the same apparent conjugal intimacy. Thus they spent whole hours braving the intolerable wearisomeness of their protracted *tête-à-têtes*, out of mere obsequiousness.

The self-devotion of Mesdames for the King their father, throughout his dreadful malady, had produced that effect upon their health which was generally apprehended. On the fourth day after their arrival at Choisy, the three princesses were attacked by pains in the head and sickness, which left no doubt



## ENTHUSIASM FOR THE NEW REIGN

as to the danger of the situation. It became necessary instantly to send away the young royal family; and the Château de La Muette, in the Bois de Boulogne, was selected for their reception. Their arrival at that residence, which was very near Paris, drew so great a concourse of people into its neighbourhood, that even at daybreak the crowd had begun to assemble round the gates. Shouts of "Vive le Roi!" were scarcely interrupted for a moment between six o'clock in the morning and sunset. The hopes to which a new reign gives birth, and the unpopularity the late King had drawn upon himself during his latter years, occasioned all these transports of joy.

A fashionable jeweller made a fortune by the sale of mourning snuff-boxes, whereon the portrait of the young Queen, in a black frame of shagreen, admitted of the following pun: "Comfort in chagrin." All the fashions, and every part of dress, received names significant of the spirit of the moment. The symbols of abundance were everywhere represented, and the head-dresses of the ladies were surrounded by ears of wheat. Poets sang the new monarch; all hearts, or rather all heads in France, were filled with unexampled enthusiasm. Never did the commencement of any reign excite more unanimous testimonials of love and attachment. It must be observed, however, that amidst all this intoxication, the anti-Austrian party never lost sight of the young Queen, but kept on the watch, with the malicious desire to injure

## MOURNING AT LA MUETTE

her, for such errors as might be expected to arise out of her youth and inexperience.

Their Majesties had to receive at La Muette the condolences of the ladies who had been presented at court, who all felt themselves called on to pay homage to the new sovereigns. Old and young hastened to present themselves on the day of general reception; little black bonnets with great wings, old shaking heads, low curtsies, keeping time with the motions of the head, made, it must be admitted, a few venerable dowagers appear somewhat ridiculous; but the Queen, who possessed a great deal of dignity, and a high respect for decorum, was not guilty of the grievous sin of losing the state she was bound to preserve. An indiscreet piece of drollery of one of the ladies of the palace, however, procured her the imputation of doing so. The Marquise de Clermont-Tonnerre, whose office required that she should continue standing behind the Queen, fatigued by the length of the ceremony, found it more convenient to seat herself upon the floor, concealing herself behind the fence formed by the hoops of the Queen and the ladies of the palace. Thus seated, and wishing to attract attention and to appear lively, she twitched the dresses of those ladies, and played off a thousand other tricks. The contrast of these childish pranks with the gloom which reigned over the rest of the Queen's chamber disconcerted her Majesty several times: she placed her fan before her face to hide an involuntary smile, and the areopagus of old ladies

## DANGER OF JESTING AT COURT

pronounced that the young Queen had derided all the respectable persons who were pressing forward to pay their homage to her; that she liked none but the young; that she was deficient in every point of decorum; and that not one of them would attend her court again. The epithet *moqueuse* was applied to her; and there is not an epithet less favourably received in the world.

The next day a very ill-natured song was circulated; the seal of the party to which it was attributable might easily be seen upon it. I remember none of it but the following chorus:

“ *Little queen, you must not be  
So saucy, with your twenty years;  
Your ill-used courtiers soon will see  
You pass, once more, the barriers.  
Fal lal lal, fal lal la.* ”

The errors of the great, or those which ill-nature chooses to impute to them, circulate in the world with the greatest rapidity, and become fixed there like an historical tradition, which the meanest boor delights to repeat. More than fifteen years after this occurrence, I heard some old ladies in the most retired part of Auvergne, relating all the particulars of the day of public condolence for the late King, on which, as they said, the Queen had laughed in the faces of the duchesses and sexagenary princesses who had thought it their duty to make their appearance on the occasion.

## KING AND PRINCES INOCULATED

The King and the princes, his brothers, determined to avail themselves of the advantages held out by inoculation, in order to preserve themselves from the fatal disorder under which their grandfather had just fallen; but the utility of this new discovery not being then generally acknowledged in France, many persons in Paris were greatly alarmed at the step which the King and the princes had just taken; those who blamed it openly, threw all the responsibility of it upon the Queen, who alone, they said, could have ventured to give such rash advice. Inoculation was at this time safely practised in the northern courts, and the operation upon the King and his brothers, performed by Dr. Jauberthou, was fortunately quite successful.<sup>1</sup>

When the convalescence of the princes was perfectly established, the court became tolerably cheerful. In the excursions to Marly, parties on horseback, and in calashes, were formed continually. The Queen was desirous to gratify herself with one very innocent enjoyment; she had never witnessed the day break: and having now no other consent than that of the King to seek, she intimated her wish to him. He agreed that she should go at three o'clock in the morning, to the eminences of the gardens of Marly; and, unfortunately, little disposed to partake in her

<sup>1</sup> [The inoculation was successful (see *La Correspondance inédite de Marie Antoinette*, p. 75). Inoculation had long been practised by the Chinese and other Eastern peoples. The letters of Lady Wortley Montagu made it known in England, where it was adopted with general success. Dr. Jenner's cure by vaccination was not practised until the early part of the nineteenth century.]



## SUNRISE AT MARLY

amusements, he himself went to bed. The Queen then followed up her intention; but as she foresaw some inconveniences possible in this nocturnal party, she determined on having a number of people with her; and even ordered her women to accompany her. All precautions were ineffectual to prevent the effects of calumny, which even thus early sought to diminish the general attachment she had inspired. A few days afterwards, the most wicked ballad that appeared during the earlier days of this reign, was circulated at Paris. The blackest colours were employed to paint an enjoyment so harmless, that there is scarcely a young woman among those that live in the country, who has not endeavoured to procure it for herself. The verses which appeared on this occasion were entitled "Sunrise."<sup>1</sup>

The Duc d'Orléans, then Duc de Chartres, was among those who accompanied the young Queen in her nocturnal ramble. He appeared very attentive to her on that occasion; but it was the only moment of his life in which there was any advance towards intimacy between the Queen and himself. The King disliked the character of the Duc de Chartres, and the Queen always kept him at a distance from her private society. It is, therefore, without the slight-

<sup>1</sup> It was thus, with libels and ill-natured ballads, that the enemies of Marie Antoinette hailed the first days of her reign. They exerted themselves every way to render her unpopular. Their aim was, beyond all doubt, to have her sent back to Germany; and there was not a moment to be lost in its accomplishment. That the indifference of the King towards his amiable and beautiful wife had lasted so long, was already a matter of wonder; day after day it was to be expected that the seductive charms of Marie Antoinette would undo all their machinations. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## THE DIAMOND EARRINGS

est foundation in probability, that some writers have attributed to feelings of jealousy, or wounded self-love, the hatred which he displayed towards the Queen during the latter years of their existence.

It was on this first journey to Marly, that Bœhmer,<sup>1</sup> the jeweller, appeared at court; a man whose stupidity and avarice afterwards produced the occurrence which most fatally affected the happiness and reputation of Marie Antoinette. This person had, at great expense, collected six pear-shaped diamonds of a prodigious size; they were perfectly matched, and of the finest water. The earrings, which they composed, had, before the death of Louis XV, been destined for the Comtesse du Barry.

Bœhmer, by the recommendation of several persons about the court, came to offer these jewels to the Queen: he asked four hundred thousand francs for them: the young Queen could not withstand her wish to purchase them; and the King having just raised the Queen's income, which under the former reign had been but two hundred thousand livres, to one hundred thousand crowns a year, she wished to make the purchase out of her own purse, and not burden the royal treasury with payment for a matter of pure fancy: she proposed to Bœhmer to take off the two buttons which formed the tops of the

<sup>1</sup> [Bœhmer was jeweller to the King of Poland, and later to Madame du Barry. He was ruined by her fall, and in 1785 was made jeweller to the crown at the recommendation of Marie Antoinette. He supplied the famous Diamond Necklace, bought by Madame de Lamotte, and was imprisoned in the Bastille.]

## MADemoisELLE BERTIN

clusters, as they could be replaced by two of her own diamonds. He consented, and then reduced the price of the earrings to three hundred and sixty thousand francs; the payment for which was stipulated to be made by instalments, and was discharged in the course of four or five years by the first female attendant of the Queen, deputed to manage the funds of her privy purse. I have omitted no details as to the manner in which the Queen first became possessed of these jewels, deeming them very needful to place the too famous circumstance of the necklace, which happened near the end of the reign of Marie Antoinette, in its true light. It was likewise on this first journey to Marly, that the Duchesse de Chartres, afterwards Duchesse d'Orléans, introduced into the Queen's household Mademoiselle Bertin, a milliner, who became celebrated at that time for the total change which she effected in the dress of the French ladies.

It will be seen that the admission of a milliner into the house of the Queen was followed by evil consequences to her Majesty. The skill of the milliner, who was received into the household in spite of the usual custom which kept all persons of her description out of it, afforded her the means of introducing some new fashion every day. Up to this time the Queen had shown but a very plain taste in dress; she now began to make it an occupation of moment; and she was of course imitated by other women.

All wished instantly to have the same dress as

## EXTRAVAGANT HEAD-DRESSES

the Queen, and to wear the feathers and flowers to which her beauty, then in its brilliancy, lent an indescribable charm. The expenditure of the younger ladies was necessarily much increased; mothers and husbands murmured at it; some few giddy women contracted debts; unpleasant domestic scenes occurred; several families either quarrelled, or grew cool among themselves; and the general report was—that the Queen would be the ruin of all the French ladies.

Fashion continued its fluctuating progress; and head-dresses, with their superstructures of gauze, flowers, and feathers, obtained so great a degree of loftiness, that the women could not find carriages high enough to admit them; and they were often seen either stooping, or holding their heads out of the windows. Others knelt down in order to manage these elevated objects of ridicule with the less danger.<sup>1</sup> Innumerable caricatures, exhibited in all directions, and some of which artfully gave the features of the Queen, attacked the extravagance of fashion, but with very little effect. It changed only, as is al-

<sup>1</sup> If the use of these extravagant feathers and head-dresses had continued, say the *Memoirs* of that period very seriously, it would have effected a revolution in architecture. It would have been found necessary to raise the doors and ceilings of the boxes at the theatres, and particularly the bodies of carriages. It was not without mortification that the King observed the Queen's adoption of this style of dress: she was never so lovely in his eyes as when unadorned by art. One day, Carlin, performing at court before the Queen, as Harlequin, stuck in his hat, instead of the rabbit's tail, its prescribed ornament, a peacock's feather of excessive length. This new appendage, which repeatedly got entangled among the scenery, gave him an opportunity of performing a great deal of buffoonery. There was an inclination to punish him: but it was presumed that he had not assumed the feather without authority. *Note by the Editor.*



## ETIQUETTE OF THE TOILET

ways the case, through the influence of inconstancy and time.

The Queen's toilet was a masterpiece of etiquette: everything done on the occasion was in a prescribed form. Both the *dame d'honneur* and the tirewoman usually attended and officiated, assisted by the principal lady-in-waiting, and two inferior attendants.<sup>1</sup> The tirewoman put on the petticoat, and handed the gown to the Queen. The *dame d'honneur* poured out the water for her hands, and put on her body linen. When a princess of the royal family happened to be present while the Queen was dressing, the *dame d'honneur* yielded to her the latter act of office, but still did not yield it directly to the princesses of the blood; in such a case the *dame d'honneur* was accustomed to present the linen to the chief lady-in-waiting, who, in her turn, handed it to the princess of the blood. Each of these ladies observed these rules scrupulously, as affecting her rights. One winter day it happened that the Queen, who was entirely undressed, was just going to put on her body linen; I held it ready unfolded for her; the *dame d'honneur* came in, slipped off her gloves, and took it. A scratching was heard at the door; it was opened: and in

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between the honorary service and the ordinary service is easily drawn. "I have the right to do it," says honorary service haughtily. "You must do it, you must follow," surlily answers ordinary service. Between these ridiculous and contradictory airs, of people who have the right to act, and do not act, and people whose duty it is to act, and who still do not act, the great are likely to be very ill served. Madame Campan has taken pains to collect particulars relative to the ordinary service of the Queen of France. They will be found among the Historical Illustrations (pp. 241-261). *Note by the Editor.*

## ETIQUETTE OF THE TOILET

came the Duchesse d'Orléans; she took her gloves off, and came forward to take the garment; but as it would have been wrong in the *dame d'honneur* to hand it to her, she gave it to me, and I handed it to the princess: a further noise—it was the Comtesse de Provence; the Duchesse d'Orléans handed her the linen. All this while the Queen kept her arms crossed upon her bosom, and appeared to feel cold. Madame observed her uncomfortable situation, and merely laying down her handkerchief, without taking off her gloves, she put on the linen, and in doing so, knocked the Queen's cap off. The Queen laughed to conceal her impatience, but not until she had muttered several times, "How disagreeable! how tiresome!"

All this etiquette, however inconvenient, was suitable to the royal dignity, which expects to find servants in all classes of persons, beginning even with the brothers and sisters of the monarch.

Speaking here of etiquette, I do not allude to that order of state laid down for days of ceremony in all courts. I mean those minute ceremonies that were observed towards our kings in their inmost privacies, in their hours of pleasure, in those of pain, and even during the most revolting of human infirmities.

These servile rules were drawn up into a kind of code; they offered to a Richelieu, a Rochefoucault, and a Duras, in the exercise of their domestic functions, opportunities of intimacy useful to their interests; and to humour their vanity, they were pleased with customs which converted the right to give a

## ETIQUETTE OF THE TOILET

glass of water, to put on a dress, and to remove a basin, into honourable prerogatives.<sup>1</sup>

Princes thus accustomed to be treated as divinities, naturally arrived at the belief that they were of a distinct nature, of a purer essence than the rest of mankind.

This sort of etiquette, which led our princes to be treated in private as idols, made them in public, martyrs to decorum. Marie Antoinette found in the castle of Versailles a multitude of established and revered customs which appeared to her insupportable.<sup>2</sup>

The ladies-in-waiting, who were all obliged to be sworn, and to wear full court dresses, were alone entitled to remain in the room, and to attend in conjunction with the *dame d'honneur* and the tirewoman. The Queen abolished all this formality. When her head was dressed, she curtsied to all the ladies who were in her chamber, and followed only by her women went into her closet, where Mademoiselle Bertin, who could not be admitted into the chamber, used to await her.<sup>3</sup> It was in this inner closet that she produced her

<sup>1</sup> When the Queen took medicine, it was customary for the lady of honour to remove the basin from the bed. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> [Marie Antoinette wrote thus to her mother, Maria Theresa: "August 27, 1770.—My life, although I have nothing to do, is still full of affairs: it is not at all like what it was at Vienna or Schönbrunn: even the life of the royal family is a spectacle."]

<sup>3</sup> Mademoiselle Bertin, it is said, upon the strength of the Queen's kindness, assumed a most ridiculous degree of pride. A lady one day went to that famous fashion-monger, to ask for some patterns of mourning for the Empress. Several were shown to her, all of which she rejected. Mademoiselle Bertin exclaimed in a tone of voice made up of vexation and self-sufficiency, "Show her then some specimens of my last *transactions* with her Majesty." However ridiculous the expression may sound, it was actually used as related. *Note by the Editor.*

## THEIR MAJESTIES' PUBLIC DINNERS

new and numerous dresses. The Queen was also desirous of being served by the most fashionable hairdresser in Paris. Now the custom which forbade all persons in inferior office employed by royalty, to exert their talents for the public, was no doubt intended to cut off all communication between the privacy of princes and society at large; the latter being always extremely curious respecting the most trifling particulars relative to the private life of the former. The Queen, fearing that the taste of the hairdresser would suffer if he should discontinue the general practice of his art, ordered him to serve as usual certain ladies of the court and capital; and this multiplied the opportunities of learning details respecting the household, and very often of misrepresenting them.

One of the customs most disagreeable to the Queen was that of dining every day in public. Marie Leczinska had constantly submitted to this wearisome practice: Marie Antoinette followed it as long as she was dauphiness. The dauphin dined with her, and each branch of the family had its public dinner daily. The ushers suffered all decently dressed people to enter; the sight was the delight of persons from the country. At the dinner hour there were none to be met upon the stairs but honest folks who, after having seen the dauphiness take her soup, went to see the princes eat their *bouilli*, and then ran themselves out of breath to behold Mesdames at their dessert.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It will be imagined that the charms of conversation, cheerfulness, and good-natured freedom, which in France contribute to the pleasures of the table, were strangers to these ceremonious repasts. In fact it was necessary to have



## CEREMONIES ABOLISHED

Very ancient usage, too, required that the queens of France should appear in public surrounded only by women; even at meal times, no persons of the other sex attended to serve at table; and although the King ate publicly with the Queen, yet he himself was served by women with everything which was presented to him directly at table. The *dame d'honneur*, kneeling for her own accommodation upon a low stool, with a napkin upon her arm, and four women in full dress, presented the plates to the King and Queen. The *dame d'honneur* handed them drink. This service had formerly been the right of the maids of honour. The Queen, upon her accession to the throne, abolished the usage altogether; she also freed herself from the necessity of being followed in the palace of Versailles by two of her women in court dresses, during those hours of the day when the ladies-in-waiting were not with her. From that time she was accompanied only by a single *valet de chambre* and two footmen. All the errors of Marie Antoinette were of the same description with those I have just detailed. A disposition gradually to substitute the simple customs of Vienna for those of Versailles was more injurious to her than she could possibly have imagined.

The Queen frequently spoke to the Abbé de Vermond of the perpetually recurring ceremonies from which she had to disengage herself; and I observed, that always after having listened to what he had to

been habituated from infancy to eat in public, in order to avoid loss of appetite from being the object to which the eyes of so many strangers were directed.

*Note by Madame Campan.*

## THE QUEEN'S LOVE OF SIMPLICITY

say on the subject, she very complacently indulged in philosophical reveries on simplicity beneath the diadem, and paternal confidence in devoted subjects. This pleasing romance of royalty, which it is not given to all sovereigns to realize, flattered the tender heart and youthful fancy of Marie Antoinette in an extraordinary degree.

Brought up in a court where simplicity was combined with majesty, placed at Versailles between an importunate *dame d'honneur* and an imprudent adviser, it is not surprising that when she became Queen she should be desirous of evading disagreeables, the indispensable necessity of which she could not see: this error sprung from a true feeling of sensibility. This unfortunate princess, against whom the opinions of the French people were at length greatly excited, possessed qualities which deserved to obtain the highest degree of popularity. None could doubt this, who, like myself, had heard her with delight describe the patriarchal manners of the House of Lorraine. She was accustomed to say that, by transplanting their manners into Austria, the princes of that house had laid the foundation of the unassailable popularity enjoyed by the imperial family.<sup>1</sup> She frequently related to me the interesting manner in which the dukes of Lorraine levied the taxes. "The sovereign prince," said she, "went to church; after the sermon he rose, waved his hat in the air, to show that he was about

<sup>1</sup> See the Historical Illustrations, Note IX, p. 284, for several curious peculiarities of the simple habits of the court of Vienna. *Note by the Editor.*

## THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE QUALITIES

to speak, and then mentioned the sum whereof he stood in need. Such was the zeal of the good Lorrainers, that men have been known to take away linen or household utensils without the knowledge of their wives, and sell them to add the value to the contribution. It sometimes happened, too, that the prince received more money than he had asked for, in which case he restored the surplus."

All who were acquainted with the Queen's private qualities knew that she equally deserved attachment and esteem. Kind and patient to the utmost in all her relations with her household, she indulgently considered all around her; and interested herself in their fortunes and in their pleasures. She had among her women, young girls from the Maison de Saint-Cyr, all well born; the Queen forbade them the play when the performances were not of a suitable degree of morality: sometimes, when old plays were to be represented, if she found she could not with certainty trust to her memory, she would take the trouble to read them in the morning, to enable her to judge of them, and then decide whether the girls should, or should not, go to see them: rightly considering herself bound to watch over the morals and conduct of those young persons.

I am pleased at being able here to assert the truth respecting two valuable qualities which the Queen possessed in a high degree—temperance and modesty. Her customary dinner was a chicken, roasted or boiled, and she drank water only. She showed no

## THE QUEEN'S MODESTY

particular partiality for anything but her coffee in the morning, and a sort of bread, to which she had been accustomed in her infancy at Vienna.

Her modesty, in every particular of her private toilet, was extreme; she bathed in a long flannel gown buttoned up to the neck; and, while her two bathing women assisted her out of the bath, she required one of them to hold a cloth before her, raised so that her attendants might not see her. And yet one Soulavie has dared, in the first volume of a most scandalous work, to say that the Queen was disgustingly immodest; that she was accustomed to bathe naked, and that she had even given admittance to a venerable ecclesiastic while in that state. What punishment can be too great for libellers who dare to give such perfidious falsehoods the title of Historical Memoirs?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Everyone must share the indignation felt by Madame Campan on reading, in the Abbé Soulavie's Memoirs, the details to which, with a warmth highly creditable to her, she gives the lie. How could an historian, possessed of any sagacity, put forth assertions so false? How could a man of any sense of shame — how could a priest write them down? After reading this passage of his Historical Memoirs, we may imagine why there exists so much unwillingness to consult them, and how much discredit similar assertions throw upon whatever truths he may have published in the same work. *Note by the Editor.*



## CHAPTER V

**D**URING the first few months of his reign Louis XVI had dwelt at La Muette, Marly, and Compiègne. When he was settled at Versailles he occupied himself with a general revision of his grandfather's papers. He had promised the Queen to communicate to her all that he might discover relative to the history of the Man with the Iron Mask:<sup>1</sup> he thought, after what he had heard on the subject, that this iron mask had become so inexhaustible a source of conjecture only in consequence of the interest which the pen of a celebrated writer had raised respecting the detention of a prisoner of state, who was merely a man of whimsical tastes and habits.

I was with the Queen when the King, having finished his researches, informed her that he had not found anything among the secret papers elucidating the existence of this prisoner; that he had conversed on the matter with M. de Maurepas, whose age showed him to have been contemporary with the epoch during which the anecdote in question must have been known to the ministers; and that M. de Maurepas had assured him he was merely a prisoner of a very dangerous character, in consequence of his disposition for intrigue; and was a subject of the Duke

<sup>1</sup> [Man with the Iron Mask. — A French state prisoner confined in the Bastille, Pignerol, and other prisons in the reign of Louis XIV. He always wore a mask of iron covered with black velvet. Among other people he was supposed to be (1) Duc de Vermandois, natural son of Louis XIV; (2) an elder brother of Louis XIV; (3) a twin brother of Louis XIV. The mystery, however, was never revealed. He died in 1703.]

## MAN WITH THE IRON MASK

of Mantua. He was enticed to the frontier, arrested there, and kept prisoner, first at Pignerol, and afterwards in the Bastille. This transfer from one prison to the other took place in consequence of the appointment of the governor of the former place to the government of the latter. He was aware of the stratagems of his prisoner; and it was for fear the latter should profit by the inexperience of a new governor, that he was sent with the governor of Pignerol to the Bastille.

Such was, in fact, the truth about the man on whom people have been pleased to fix an iron mask. And thus was it related in writing, and published by M. — twenty years ago. He had searched the *dépôt* of foreign affairs, and there he had found the truth: he laid it before the public; but the public, prepossessed in favour of a version which attracted them by the marvellous, would not acknowledge the authenticity of the true account. Every man relied upon the authority of Voltaire: and it is still believed that a natural or a twin brother of Louis XIV lived a number of years in prison with a mask over his face. The whimsical story of this mask, perhaps, had its origin in the old custom among both men and women in Italy, of wearing a velvet mask when they exposed themselves to the sun. It is possible that the Italian captive may have sometimes shown himself upon the terrace of his prison with his face thus covered. As to the silver plate which this celebrated prisoner is said to have thrown from his window, it is known that such a circumstance did happen; but it happened at Valzin. It

## SOLICITUDE FOR MESDAMES

was in the time of Cardinal Richelieu. This anecdote has been mixed up with the inventions respecting the Piedmontese prisoner.

It was also in this review of his grandfather's papers that Louis XVI found some very curious particulars relative to his private treasury. Certain shares in various companies of finance afforded him a revenue, and had at last produced him a capital of some amount, which he applied to his secret expenses. The King collected his vouchers of title to these shares, and made a present of them to M. Thierry de Ville-D'Avray, his chief *valet de chambre*.

The Queen was desirous to secure the comfort of the princesses, the daughters of Louis XV, who were held in the highest respect. About this period she contributed to furnish them with a revenue sufficient to provide them an easy competence. The King gave them the château of Bellevue; and added to the produce of it, which was given up to them, the expenses of their table and equipage, and payment of all the charges of their household, the number of which was even increased. During the lifetime of Louis XV, who was a very selfish prince, his daughters, although they had attained forty years of age, had no other place of residence than their apartments in the palace of Versailles; no other walks than such as they could take in the large park of that palace; and no other means of gratifying their taste for a garden, but by having boxes and vases filled with plants in their balconies or their closets. They had, therefore, rea-

## THE QUEEN AT THE PLAYHOUSE

son to be much pleased with the conduct of Marie Antoinette, who had the greatest influence in the King's kindness towards his aunts.

Paris did not cease, during the first years of the reign, to give proofs of joy whenever the Queen appeared at any of the plays of the capital. The representation of "Iphigenia in Aulis" produced one of the most pleasing triumphs to her that ever were given to any sovereign. The actor who sang the words, "Let us sing, let us celebrate our Queen," which were repeated by the chorus, directed, by a respectful movement towards her Majesty, the eyes of the whole assembly upon her. Reiterated cries of "Encore!" and clapping of hands, were followed by such a burst of enthusiasm, that many of the audience added their voices to those of the actors, in order to celebrate, it might too truly be said, another Iphigenia. The Queen, deeply affected, covered her streaming eyes with her handkerchief; and this public proof of sensibility raised the general enthusiasm to a still higher pitch.

Such a reception unfortunately induced the Queen too often to seek for circumstances which might either present or recall enjoyments equally delightful.

The King gave her Petit Trianon.<sup>1</sup> Henceforward

<sup>1</sup> The seat called Petit Trianon, which was built for Louis XV, is not remarkably handsome as a building. The luxuriance of the hot-houses rendered the place agreeable to that prince. He spent a few days there several times in the year. It was while he was setting off from Versailles for Petit Trianon, that he was struck in the side by the knife of Damiens; and it was there that he was attacked by smallpox, of which disorder he died on the 10th of May, 1774.  
*Note by Madame Campan.*





*Marie Antoinette.*



## PETIT TRIANON

she amused herself with improving the gardens, without allowing any addition to the building, or any change in the furniture, which was become very shabby; and was remaining, in 1789, in the same state as during the reign of Louis XV. Everything there, without exception, was preserved; and the Queen slept in a very faded bed, which in fact had been used by the Comtesse du Barry. The charge of extravagance generally made against the Queen is the most unaccountable of all the popular errors respecting her character which have crept into the world.<sup>1</sup> She had exactly the contrary failing: and I could prove that she often carried her economy to a degree of parsimony actually blamable, and particularly in a sovereign. She took a great liking for her retirement at Trianon; she used to go there alone, followed by a valet; but she found attendants ready to receive her—a steward, and his wife, who served her as *femme de chambre*; women of the wardrobe; footmen, &c.

When she first took possession of Petit Trianon, a report was spread that she had changed the name of the seat which the King had just given her, and had called it “Little Vienna,” or “Little Schönbrunn.” A person who belonged to the court, and was silly

<sup>1</sup> This charge of prodigality, so unjustly laid against the Queen, was spread with such industry throughout France and all Europe, that it must have been a part of the scheme for rendering the court solely responsible for the bad state of the finances.\* *Note by Madame Campan.*

\* [The charge of extravagance resulted largely from her habit of gambling, into which she was drawn by the Comte d'Artois, and by her own weariness of state etiquette. On July 8, 1771, she wrote: “I have no liking whatever for gambling, and one plays far too much.”]

## FALSE ACCUSATIONS

enough to give this report a hasty credit, wishing to visit Petit Trianon with a party, wrote to M. Campan requesting the Queen's permission to do so. In his note he called Trianon "Little Vienna." Similar requests were usually laid before the Queen just as they were made: she chose to give permission to see her gardens herself, feeling it agreeable to grant these little marks of favour. When she came to the obnoxious words she was very much offended, and exclaimed, angrily, that there were too many fools ready to aid the malicious; that she had been told of the report circulated, which pretended that she thought of nothing but her own country, and that she kept an Austrian heart, while the interests of France alone ought to engage her. She refused this request, so awkwardly made, and desired M. Campan to reply that Trianon was not to be seen for some time; and that the Queen was astonished that any man of respectability should believe she would do so ill-judged a thing as to change the French names of her palaces for foreign ones.<sup>1</sup>

Before the Emperor Joseph II's first visit to France, the Queen received a visit from the Archduke Maximilian, in 1775. An unfounded pretension, suggested by the persons who advised this prince, or rather an act of stupidity of the ambassador, seconded on the

<sup>1</sup> [The charges of her Austrian proclivities are much exaggerated. On November 26, 1775, she wrote to Joseph II: "Finally, my dear brother, I am now French rather than Austrian;" and on May 3, 1777, to her sister Marie Christine: "I feel myself a Frenchwoman to the finger-tips; . . . the nation is perfection; the strictures and objections of my brother [Joseph] only confirm me in those opinions."]



## A FAMILY QUARREL

part of the Queen by the Abbé de Vermond, gave rise to a discussion which offended the princes of the blood and the chief nobility of the kingdom, with the Queen. Travelling *incognito*, the young prince insisted that the first visit was not due from him to the princes of the blood; and the Queen supported his contention.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of the Regency, and on account of the residence of the family of Orléans in the bosom of the capital, Paris had preserved a remarkable degree of attachment and respect for that branch: and although the crown was becoming more and more remote from the princes of the House of Orléans, they had the advantage (a great one with the Parisians) of being the descendants of Henri IV. An affront to the princes, and especially to that beloved family, was a serious ground of dislike to the Queen. It was at this period, and perhaps for the first time, that the circles of the city, and even of the court, expressed themselves bitterly about her levity, and her partiality for the House of Austria. The prince, for whom the Queen had embarked in an important family quarrel,—a quarrel involving national prerogatives,—was, besides, little calculated to inspire interest. Still young, uninformed, and deficient in natural talent, he was always committing some foolish errors.

<sup>1</sup> Two mistakes of this description were made at court — one at the time of the dauphiness' marriage, and the other on the occasion here spoken of by Madame Campan. These questions of precedence, imprudently discussed, and which irritated the superior nobility, gave rise to disputes, furnished anecdotes, and produced *bons mots* and epigrams, some of which Grimm relates in his Correspondence, and which will be found in the Historical Illustrations, Note X, p. 285. *Note by the Editor.*

## ACCUSED OF BEING AUSTRIAN

The archduke's visit was in every point of view a misadventure. He did nothing but commit blunders: he went to the King's garden; M. de Buffon, who received him there, presented him with a copy of his works; the prince declined to accept the book, saying to M. de Buffon in the most polite manner possible, "I should be very sorry to deprive you of it."<sup>1</sup> It may be supposed that the Parisians were much entertained with this answer.

The Queen was exceedingly mortified at the blunders committed by her brother; but what hurt her most on the occasion was being accused of preserving an Austrian heart. Marie Antoinette had more than once to endure that cruel imputation during the long course of her misfortunes; habit did not stop the tears drawn forth by such instances of injustice; but the first time she was suspected of not loving France, she gave vent to her indignation. All she could say on the subject was useless: by seconding the pretensions of the archduke she had put arms into her enemies' hands; they were labouring to deprive her of the love of the people, and endeavoured, by all possible means, to spread a belief that the Queen sighed for Germany, and preferred that country to France.

Marie Antoinette had none but herself to rely on for preserving the fickle smiles of the court and the public. The King, too indifferent to serve her as a guide, as yet had conceived no love for her; the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph II, on his visit to France, went also to see M. de Buffon, and said to that celebrated man, "I am come to fetch the copy of your works which my brother forgot." *Note by the Editor.*

## CORONATION AT RHEIMS

intimacy that grew between them at Choisy having had no such result.<sup>1</sup>

In his closet Louis XVI was immersed in deep study. At the council he was busied with the welfare of his people; hunting and mechanical occupations engrossed his leisure moments, and he never thought on the subject of an heir.

The coronation took place at Rheims, with all the accustomed pomp. At this period Louis XVI experienced that which can, and should, most powerfully affect the heart of a virtuous sovereign. The people's love for him burst forth in those unanimous transports which are clearly distinguishable from the impulse of curiosity or the cries of party. He replied to this enthusiasm by marks of confidence, worthy of a people happy in being under the government of a good king; he took a pleasure in repeatedly walking without guards, in the midst of the crowd which pressed around him and called down blessings on his head. I remarked the impression made at this time by an observation of Louis XVI. On the day of his coronation, in the middle of the choir of the cathedral at Rheims, he put his hand up to his head, at the moment of the crown being placed upon it, and said, "It pinches me." Henri III had exclaimed, "It pricks me." Those who were near the King were struck

<sup>1</sup> [Madame Campan is unjust to Louis. Apropos of these slanders Marie Antoinette wrote on October 8, 1775, to Joseph II: "The indignation of the King when he hears things of this kind surpasses mine; but after all how can they be stopped? To make a noise about them would be merely to advertise the scandal."]

## THE DUC D'ANGOULÊME

with the similitude between these two exclamations, though it will not be imagined that such as had the honour of being near the young monarch on that day were of the class which may be blinded by the superstitious fears of ignorance.<sup>1</sup>

While the Queen, neglected as she was, could not even hope for the happiness of being a mother, she had the mortification to witness the confinement of the Comtesse d'Artois, and the birth of the Duc d'Angoulême.

Custom required that the royal family and the whole court should be present at the delivery of the princesses; that of the Queen was forced to be absolutely public. The Queen was therefore obliged to stay the whole day in her sister-in-law's chamber. The moment the Comtesse d'Artois was informed it was a prince, she put her hand to her forehead, and exclaimed with energy, "My God, how happy I am!" The Queen felt very differently at this involuntary and natural exclamation. At that moment she had not even the hope of being a mother. She nevertheless disguised her mortification. She bestowed all possible marks of tenderness upon the young mother, and would not leave her until she was put into bed; she afterwards passed along the staircase, and through

<sup>1</sup> The account of the coronation of Louis XVI is interesting to the present generation, because all the usages of the ancient monarchy are to be found in it. Many circumstances attending it likewise place the characters of the King and Queen in the most favourable light. But as these details are taken from a work published in 1791, it cannot be surprising that they are strongly tinged with the spirit and feeling of the times. (See *Historical Illustrations*, Note XI, p. 288.) *Note by the Editor.*



## THE QUEEN ADOPTS A CHILD

the guard-room, with a calm demeanour, in the midst of an immense crowd. The *poissardes*, who had assumed a right of speaking to sovereigns in their own gross and ridiculous language, followed her to her very apartments, calling out to her in the most licentious expressions, that *she* ought to produce heirs. The Queen reached her inner room, hurried and agitated; she shut herself up to weep with me alone, not from jealousy of her sister-in-law's happiness—of that she was incapable—but from affliction at her own situation.

I have often had occasion to admire the Queen's moderation in all cases of great and personal interest; she was extremely affecting when in misfortune.

Deprived of the happiness of giving an heir to the crown, the Queen endeavoured to surround herself with illusions which might beguile her feelings. She had always children belonging to the people of her house near her, and lavished the tenderest caresses upon them. She had long been desirous to bring up one of them herself, and to make it the constant object of her care. A little village boy, four or five years old, full of health, with a pleasing countenance, remarkably large blue eyes, and fine light hair, carelessly got under the feet of the Queen's horses, when she was taking an airing in a calash, through the hamlet of Saint Michel, near Louveciennes. The coachman and postilions stopped the horses, and the child was rescued from its imminent peril, without the slightest

## THE QUEEN ADOPTS A CHILD

injury. Its grandmother rushed out of the door of her cottage to take it; but the Queen stood up in her calash, and extending her arms to the old woman, called out that the child was hers, and that Providence had given it to her to console her, no doubt, until she should have the happiness of having one herself. "Is his mother alive?" asked the Queen. "No, madame; my daughter died last winter, and left five small children upon my hands." "I will take this one, and provide for all the rest. Do you consent?" "Ah, madame, they are too fortunate," replied the cottager; "but James is very wayward: I hope he will stay with you!" The Queen, taking little James upon her knee, said she would soon make him used to her; that it should be her occupation; and she ordered the equipage to proceed. It was necessary, however, to shorten the ride, so violently did James scream and kick the Queen and her ladies.

The arrival of her Majesty at her apartments at Versailles, holding the little rustic by the hand, astonished the whole household; he screamed out with intolerable shrillness, that he wanted his grandmother, his brother Louis, and his sister Marianne; nothing could calm him. He was taken away by the wife of a servant, who was appointed to attend him as nurse. The other children were put to school. Poor James, whose family name was Armand, came back to the Queen two days afterwards: a white frock trimmed with lace, a rose-coloured sash with silver fringe, and a hat decorated with feathers had suc-

## THE QUEEN ADOPTS A CHILD

ceeded the woollen cap, and the little red frock, and wooden shoes. The child was really very beautiful. The Queen was enchanted with him; he was brought to her every morning at nine o'clock; he breakfasted and dined with her, and often with the King. She liked to call him "My child,"<sup>1</sup> and lavished the tenderest caresses upon him, still maintaining a deep silence respecting the affliction which constantly occupied her heart.

This child remained with the Queen until the time when Madame was old enough to come home to her august mother, who had particularly taken upon herself the care of her education.

The King began to take pleasure in the society of the Queen, although he had not yet exercised the privilege of a husband. The Queen was incessantly talking of the good qualities which she admired in Louis XVI, and gladly attributed to herself the slightest favourable change in his manner; perhaps she displayed too unreservedly the joy she felt at it, and the part she fancied herself to have in it.

One day Louis XVI saluted her ladies with more kindness and grace than usual, and the Queen said to them, "Now confess, ladies, that for one so badly taught, the King has saluted you in a very gentlemanly way."

The Queen detested M. de la Vauguyon; she ac-

<sup>1</sup> This little unfortunate was nearly twenty in 1792; the incendiary endeavours of the people, and the fear of being thought a favoured creature of the Queen, had made him the most sanguinary terrorist of Versailles. He was killed at the battle of Jemmapes. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON

cused him alone, of those points in the habits, and even the feelings of the King, which hurt her.<sup>1</sup>

An old lady, who had been first lady of the bed-chamber to the Queen Marie Leczinska, had continued in office near the young Queen. She was one of those old people who are fortunate enough to spend their whole lives in the service of kings, without knowing anything of what is passing at court. She was a great devotee: the Abbé Grisel, an ex-Jesuit, was her confessor. Being rich from her savings, and an income of 50,000 livres, which she had long enjoyed, she kept a very good table, and her apartment often attracted the most distinguished persons, who still advocated the order of the Jesuits. The Duc de la Vauguyon was intimate with her; their chairs at the church des Récollets were placed near each other; at high mass they sang the *Gloria in excelsis* and the *Magnificat* together; and the pious old virgin, seeing in him only one of God's elect, little imagined him to be the declared enemy of a princess whom she served and revered. On the day of his death she ran all in tears to relate to the Queen the acts of piety, humanity, and repentance of the last moments of the Duc de la Vauguyon. He had called his people together, she said, to ask their pardon. "For what?" replied the Queen sharply; "he has placed and pensioned off all his servants; it was

<sup>1</sup> [The King detested Vauguyon for his scandalous neglect of him when tutor; also for the instances of low servility of which he had been guilty towards him and the princes. (See *Mémoires de la Comtesse de Boigne*, vol. i, chap. i.)]



## THE DUC DE LA VAUGUYON

of the King and his brothers that the holy man you bewail should have asked pardon; for having paid so little attention to the education of princes on whom the fate and happiness of twenty-five millions of men depend. Luckily," added she, "although they are still young, the King and his brothers have incessantly laboured to repair the errors of their preceptor."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grimm gives the following passage: "The Duc de la Vauguyon has lately departed, to render an account at the tribunal of eternal justice, of the manner in which he has acquitted himself of the appalling and important duty of educating a dauphin of France; and to receive the punishment due to the most criminal of undertakings, if it was not fulfilled to the wishes and applause of the whole nation. A remarkable act of vanity, which excited equally the attention of the court and the city, was witnessed on that occasion; this was the card of invitation to the funeral, sent round to every house according to custom. This card, on account of its singularity, has become a tenant of the library. Everyone has wished to preserve it; and from being much sought after, it is already scarce, notwithstanding the profusion with which it was distributed. I will transcribe it here from beginning to end, in the hope that it may carry down these pages with it to posterity.

"You are requested to attend the funeral procession, service, and interment of Monseigneur Antoine-Paul-Jacques de Quélen, head of the names and arms of the ancient lords of the Castlery of Quélen, in Upper Brittany, *juveigneur* of the courts of Porhoët, appointed to the name and arms of Sieur de Caulsade, Duc de la Vauguyon, Peer of France, Prince of Carençy, Comte de Quélen, and du Boulay, Marquis de Saint Mégrin, de Callonges and d'Archiac, Vis-comte de Calvignac, baron of the ancient and honourable baronies of Tonneins, Gratteloup, Villeton, La Gruère, and Picomet, lord of Larnagol and Talcoimur, judge, knight, and protector of Sarlac, chief baron of Guyenne, second baron of Quercy, lieutenant-general of the king's armies, knight of his orders, favourite of Monseigneur the late dauphin, first gentleman of the bed-chamber of Monseigneur the dauphin, grand master of his wardrobe, formerly governor of his person, and of that of Monseigneur the Comte de Provence, governor of the person of Monseigneur the Comte d'Artois, first gentleman of his chamber, grand master of his wardrobe, and superintendent of his household, — which will take place, on Thursday the 6th of February, 1772, at ten o'clock in the morning, at the royal and parochial church of Notre Dame de Versailles, where his body will be interred. *De Profundis.*"

"It will be observed that this card is the work of reflection, combined, deep, and laborious. Its author," adds Grimm, "deserves that the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres should unanimously confer upon him the first vacant place, and register him among its members, as duke, prince, peer, marquis, count, viscount, *juveigneur*, judge, knight, protector, chief baron, second baron, and third baron. It would be well, too, to establish a professorship, the holder of which should do nothing all the year but explain to the

## PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XVI

The progress of time, and the confidence with which the King and the princes his brothers were inspired by the change of their situation since the death of Louis XV, had developed their characters. I will endeavour to depict them.

The features of Louis XVI were fine, though somewhat impressed with melancholy; his walk was heavy and unmajestic; his person greatly neglected; his hair, whatever might be the skill of his hairdresser, was soon in disorder, through his inattention to its neatness. His voice, without being harsh, possessed nothing agreeable; if he grew warm in speaking, he often got above his natural pitch, and uttered shrill sounds. The Abbé de Radonvilliers,<sup>1</sup> his preceptor, a learned, mild, and amiable man, had given him, and Monsieur also, a taste for study. The King had continued to instruct himself; he knew the English language perfectly. I have often heard him translate some of the most difficult passages in Milton's poem: he was a skilful geographer, and was fond of drawing and colouring maps; he was perfectly well versed in history, but had not perhaps sufficiently studied the spirit of it. He relished dramatic beauties, and judged

young the card of invitation to the Duc de la Vauguyon's funeral; without which it is to be feared that the learning necessary for its perfect comprehension will be insensibly lost, and the card may become in time the despair of critics."

The term *juveigneur*, for instance, is little known. A dependent junior is thus termed; the Duc d'Orléans is *juveigneur* of the House of France. This word is perhaps a corruption of the word *junior*, by which the Cæsars of the Lower Empire called those whom they associated with themselves in the empire. But for the card for M. de la Vauguyon's funeral, the term *juveigneur* was losing itself in the darkness of the times. *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> One of the forty of the French Academy.

## PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XVI

of them accurately. At Choisy, one day, several ladies strongly expressed their dissatisfaction because the French actors were going to perform one of Molière's pieces there; the King inquired of them why they disapproved of the choice. One of them answered, that everyone must admit that Molière had *very bad taste*; the King replied, that many things might be found in Molière contrary to fashion, but that it appeared to him difficult to point out any in bad taste.

This prince combined with all his information every qualification of a good husband, a tender father, and an indulgent master; and, when we reckon up so many virtues, the years which have elapsed since the barbarities of the factious, and the misfortunes of France, seem too short to convince us that any degree of wickedness could have brought itself to the perpetration of so unheard of an outrage as his death exhibited.

Unfortunately the King showed too much predilection for the mechanical arts; masonry and lock-making so delighted him that he admitted into his private apartment a common locksmith, with whom he made keys and locks; and his hands, blackened by that sort of work, were often, in my presence, the subject of remonstrances and even reproaches from the Queen, who would have chosen other amusements for the King.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Louis XVI saw in the act of lock-making something which was capable of application to a higher study. He was an excellent geographer. The most valuable and complete instrument for the study of that science was begun by his orders and under his direction. It was an immense globe of copper, which is



## THE COMTE DE PROVENCE

Austere and rigid with regard to himself alone, respecting the laws of the Church, the King observed them with scrupulous exactness. He fasted and abstained throughout the whole of Lent. He did not wish the Queen to observe these customs with the same strictness. Sincerely pious, the wisdom of the age had at the same time disposed his mind to toleration. Modest and simple in his habits, Turgot, Malesherbes, and Necker judged that a prince of such a character would willingly sacrifice the royal prerogative for the solid greatness of his people. His heart, in truth, led him to ideas of reform; but his principles, prejudices, and fears, and the clamours of pious and privileged persons intimidated him, and made him abandon the plans which his love for the people had suggested.

Monsieur had more dignity of demeanour than the King; but his size and corpulence impeded him in his gait. He was fond of pageantry and magnificence. He cultivated the belles-lettres, and, under borrowed names, repeatedly contributed verses of which he himself was the author, to the "*Mercure de France*," and other papers.<sup>1</sup>

still in existence, though unfinished, in the Mazarin Library. Louis XVI himself invented and had executed under his own eyes the ingenious mechanism by which this globe was to be managed.

A man who asserts that he entered into his private apartments after the 10th of August, has preserved, respecting the arrangements of his cabinets, books, maps, papers, furniture, and the tools he used, a crowd of details which depict, in a very interesting manner, his tastes, character, occupations, and habits. Similar details are to the private life of a prince, what a portrait is to his personal likeness, or a facsimile to his handwriting. (See *Historical Illustrations*, Note XII, p. 294.) *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> The prince of whom Madame Campan here speaks, always loved and protected literature. The judicious favour which he extended to talent was known to all France. During a tour which Monsieur made through various provinces



## THE COMTE D'ARTOIS

His wonderful memory was the handmaid of his wit, furnishing him with the happiest quotations. He knew by heart, quotations ranging from the finest passages of the Latin classics, to the Latin of all the prayers; from the works of Racine, to the Vaudeville of "Rose et Colas."

The Comte d'Artois had an agreeable countenance, was well made, active in bodily exercises, lively, sometimes impetuous, fond of pleasure, and very particular in his dress.

Some happy observations made by him were repeated with pleasure; several of them gave a favourable idea of his heart.<sup>1</sup> The Parisians liked the open

of the kingdom, he visited Toulouse. After the Parliament had harangued the prince, says a work of that period, his royal highness, in order to show particular distinction to literature, received the homage of the Academy of Floral Games, before that of the sovereign courts. The Abbé d'Auffreri, counsellor to the Parliament, spoke in the name of the Academy, of which he was a member. "It is," said he, "the duty of eloquence and poetry to describe you, Monseigneur, at the age of pleasure, finding your chief delight in retirement and study, and in sharing that enchanting taste with the august princess whose many virtues form the happiness of your life." At the end of his speech, the orator eulogised the late dauphin, father of the King and his brothers. The prince was affected while he listened to him, and when the Abbé d'Auffreri had done speaking, he approached him, and said with kindness, "I thank the Academy for its feelings in my favour; I have long known its celebrity; and you, sir, confirm the idea I entertained of that body; it may always rely upon my protection." (*Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. ii, pp. 21 and 22.)

During his stay at Avignon, Monsieur lodged with the Duc de Crillon: he refused the town-guard which was offered him, saying, "A son of France, under the roof of a Crillon, needs no guard." *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> In a work of that time there is to be found a reply which does honour to the prince's humanity. The question was respecting the treatment of prisoners; the Comte d'Artois insisted that their adversity should be respected, and that men who were only accused should not be made to undergo the treatment of culprits convicted by the laws. Upon this subject the work alluded to says as follows:

"The Abbé de Besplas, a celebrated preacher, delivered a sermon before the King, the subject of which was, 'On the marks of charity in a king.' The following passage upon jails made a most lively impression:

"Sire, the state of the prisons of your kingdom would draw tears from the

## CHARACTER OF LOUIS XVI

and undisguised air of this prince, as an attribute of the French character, and showed real affection for him.

The empire which the Queen was gaining over the King's mind, the charms of a society in which Monsieur displayed the graces of his wit, and to which the Comte d'Artois gave life by the vivacity of youth, gradually softened that roughness in the character of Louis XVI, which a better conducted education might have prevented.

Still this defect showed itself too often, and in spite of his extreme simplicity the King inspired with diffidence those who had occasion to speak to him. A commendable fear made those about him avoid his abrupt sallies, which were difficult to be foreseen. Courtiers, submissive in the presence of their sovereign, are only the more ready to caricature him ; with

most unfeeling persons who should visit them. A place of security cannot, without flagrant injustice, become the abode of despair. Your magistrates endeavour to soften the condition of the unfortunate ; but, deprived of the assistance necessary for the repair of these infected caverns, they can only listen to the complaints of the wretched in melancholy silence. Yes, sire, I have seen this, and my zeal compels me here, like Paul, to do honour to my ministry ; yes, I have seen prisoners, covered with a universal leprosy arising from the infection of these hideous dens, who blessed in our arms, a thousand times, the moment which led them to punishment. Great God ! can there be under a good prince subjects who long for the scaffold ? Blessed be this immortal day ! I have fulfilled the wish of my heart, that of depositing this weight of grief in the bosom of the best of monarchs.'

"It was observed that the King and his brothers paid the greatest attention to this passage. Indeed, the Comte d'Artois made an excellent reply on the subject of what he had heard. The next day, as he was rising, a selfish and venal courtier, such as they almost all are, was foolish enough to remark that the Abbé de Besplas had complained improperly of the manner in which the prisoners were treated in the jails, since it might be considered as a part of the punishment which their crimes deserved. The prince then interrupted him, indignantly exclaiming, 'How is it known that they are guilty ? — that is never known till the sentence is passed.' " *Note by the Editor.*

## A PRACTICAL JOKE

little of good manners, they called these answers which they so much dreaded, *les coups de boutoir du Roi*.<sup>1</sup>

Methodical in all his habits, the King always went to bed at eleven o'clock precisely. One evening the Queen was going with her usual circle to a party, either at the Duc de Duras's or the Princesse de Guéménée's. The hand of the clock was slyly put forward to hasten the King's departure to bed by a few minutes; he thought in good earnest that bedtime was come, retired, and found none of his attendants ready to wait on him. This joke became known in all the drawing-rooms of Versailles, and was much disapproved of. Kings have no privacy. Queens have neither closets nor boudoirs. This is a truth that cannot be too strongly impressed upon them. If those who are in immediate attendance upon sovereigns be not of themselves disposed to transmit their private habits to posterity, the meanest valet will relate what he has seen or heard; his tales circulate rapidly, and form that alarming public opinion which rises gradually, but keeps increasing, and at length attaches to the most august persons characters which, however often they may be false, are almost always indelible.

<sup>1</sup> The literal meaning of the phrase, "*coup de boutoir*," is a poke from the snout of a boar. Perhaps the English expression nearest in signification is "*a rap on the knuckles*." *Translator*.

## CHAPTER VI

THE winter following the confinement of the Comtesse d'Artois was very severe: the recollection of the pleasure which sledge-parties had given the Queen in her childhood made her wish to establish similar ones in France. This amusement had already been seen in the court of France; as was proved by the circumstance of there being found in the stables sledges which had been used by the Dauphin, the father of Louis XVI, in his youth. Some were constructed for the Queen in a more modern taste. The princes likewise ordered several; and in a few days there was a tolerable number of these vehicles. They were driven by the princes and noblemen of the court. The noise of the bells and balls with which the harnesses of the horses were furnished—the elegance and whiteness of their plumes—the variety of forms in the carriages—the gold with which they were all ornamented—rendered these parties delightful to the eye. The winter was very favourable to them, the snow remaining on the ground nearly six weeks: the races in the park afforded a pleasure shared by the spectators.<sup>1</sup> No one imagined that any blame could attach to so innocent an amusement. But the parties were tempted to extend their rides as far

<sup>1</sup> Louis XVI, touched with the wretched condition of the poor of Versailles during the winter of 1776, had several cart-loads of wood distributed among them. Seeing, one day, a file of those vehicles passing by, while several noblemen were preparing to be drawn swiftly over the ice, he said these memorable words to them, "Gentlemen, here are my sledges." *Note by the Editor.*



## THE SLEDGE-PARTIES

as the Champs Elysées; a few sledges even crossed the boulevards: the ladies being masked, the Queen's enemies did not omit the opportunity of saying that the Queen had traversed the streets of Paris in a sledge.

This became a matter of moment. The public discovered in such a fashion a predilection for the habits of Vienna: and yet sledge-parties were not a new fashion at Versailles. But everything Marie Antoinette did was criticised. Factions formed in courts do not openly carry different insignia, as do those generated by revolutionary convulsions. They are not, however, on that account, the less dangerous for those whom they pursue; and the Queen was never without a party against her.

Sledge-driving, which savours of the custom of the northern courts, had no success among the Parisians. The Queen was informed of this; and although all the sledges were preserved, and several subsequent winters proved favourable to the amusement, she would not pursue it any further.

It was at the time of the sledge-parties that the Queen became intimately acquainted with the Princesse de Lamballe,<sup>1</sup> who made her appearance in them wrapped in fur, with all the brilliance and freshness of the age of twenty: the emblem of Spring peeping from under sable and ermine. Her situation, more-

<sup>1</sup> [Marie Thérèse Louise de Savoie-Carignan, Princesse de Lamballe (1749–1792), was a member of the royal family of Sardinia. In 1767 she married the Prince de Lamballe, and a year later was widowed. Marie Antoinette appointed her Superintendent of the Royal Household. At the Revolution, she was imprisoned in La Force, and refusing to take the oath of disloyalty to the King, was torn to pieces by the crowd.]

## PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

over, rendered her peculiarly interesting: married, when she was scarcely past childhood, to a young prince who ruined himself by the contagious example of the Duc d'Orléans, she had nothing to do from the time of her arrival in France but to weep. A widow at eighteen, and childless, she lived with Monsieur the Duc de Penthièvre, upon the footing of an adopted daughter. She had the tenderest respect and attachment for that venerable prince: but the Queen, as well as the princess, though doing justice to his virtues, saw that the Duc de Penthièvre's way of life, whether at Paris or at his country-seat, could neither afford his young daughter-in-law the amusements of her time of life, nor insure her, for the future, an establishment such as she was deprived of by her widowhood. She determined, therefore, to establish her at Versailles; and, for her sake, revived the office of superintendent, which had been discontinued at court from the time of the death of Mademoiselle de Clermont. It is said that Marie Leczinska had decided that this place should continue vacant: the superintendent having so extensive a power in the houses of queens as to be frequently a restraint upon their inclinations. Differences which soon took place between Marie Antoinette and the Princesse de Lamballe, respecting the official prerogatives of the latter, proved that the wife of Louis XV acted judiciously in abolishing the office; but a kind of petty treaty, made between the Queen and the princess, smoothed all difficulties. The blame for too obstinate an asser-

## THE GOUPIL LIBEL

tion of claims fell upon a superintendent's secretary who had been her adviser; and everything was so arranged that a firm and lively friendship reigned between these two princesses down to the disastrous period which terminated their career.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm which the splendour, graces, and goodness of the Queen generally inspired, silent intrigues continued in operation against her. A very short time after the accession of Louis XVI to the throne, the minister of the King's household was informed that a most offensive libel against the Queen was about to appear. The lieutenant of the police deputed a man named Goupil, an inspector of police, to bring to light this libel: he came soon after, to say that he had found out the place where the work was being printed, and that it was at a country-house, near Yverdun. He had already got possession of two sheets which contained calumnies the most atrocious, but conveyed with a degree of art which might make them very dangerous to the Queen's reputation. This Goupil said that he could obtain the rest, but that he should want a considerable sum for that purpose. Three thousand louis were given him, and very soon afterwards he brought the whole manuscript, and all that had been printed, to the lieutenant of police. He received a thousand louis more as a reward for his address and zeal; and a much more important office was about to be given to him, when another spy, envious

<sup>1</sup> See the Historical Illustrations given by Madame Campan, respecting the Queen's household (p. 241). *Note by the Editor.*

## MADAME DE VILLERS'S SCHEMES

of Goupil's good fortune, gave information that Goupil himself was the author of the libel; that, ten years before, he had been put into the Bicêtre for theft; and that Madame Goupil had only been three years out of Salpêtrière, where she had been placed under another name. This Madame Goupil was very pretty and very intriguing; she had found means to form an intimacy with Cardinal de Rohan, whom she led, it is said, to hope for a reconciliation with the Queen. All this affair was hushed up, and no account of it got abroad: but it shows that it was the Queen's fate to be incessantly attacked by the meanest and most odious machinations.

Another woman, named Cahouette de Villers, whose husband held the office of one of the treasurers of France, being very irregular in conduct, and of a scheming turn of mind, conceived the mad wish to appear in the eyes of her friends at Paris, as a person in favour at court, to which she was not entitled either by birth or office. During the latter years of the life of Louis XV, she had made many dupes, and picked up considerable sums by passing herself off for the King's mistress. The fear of irritating Madame du Barry was, according to herself, the only thing which prevented her enjoying that title openly: she came regularly to Versailles, kept herself concealed in a furnished lodging, and her dupes imagined she was called to court by secret motives. This woman formed the scheme of getting admission, if possible, to the presence of the Queen, or at least of



## MADAME DE VILLERS'S SCHEMES

establishing appearances which might enable her to cause it to be believed she had been admitted. She adopted as her lover, Gabriel de Saint-Charles, intendant of her Majesty's finances; an office, the privileges of which were confined to the right of entering the Queen's apartment on a Sunday. Madame de Villers came every Saturday to Versailles with M. de Saint-Charles, and lodged in his apartment; M. Campan was there several times; she painted tolerably well; she requested him to do her the favour to present to the Queen a portrait of her Majesty which she had just copied. M. Campan knew the woman's conduct, and refused her. A few days after, he saw on her Majesty's couch the portrait which he had declined to present to her; the Queen thought it ill-painted, and gave orders that it should be carried back to the Princesse de Lamballe, who had sent it to her. Madame de Villers had succeeded in her project through the medium of the princess. The ill-success of the portrait did not deter the schemer from following up the design she had formed of having it believed that she was admitted to an intimacy with the Queen: she easily procured, through M. de Saint-Charles, patents and orders signed by her Majesty; she then set about imitating her writing, and composed a great number of notes and letters, as if written by her Majesty, in the tenderest and most familiar style. For several months she showed them as great secrets to several of her particular friends. Afterwards, she made the Queen appear to write to her as before,

## MADAME DE VILLERS'S SCHEMES

to procure her various fancy articles. Under the pretext of wishing to execute her Majesty's commissions faithfully, she gave these letters to the tradesmen to read; and succeeded in having it said in several houses, that the Queen had a particular kindness for her. She then enlarged her scheme, and represented the Queen as desiring her to borrow 200,000 francs which she had need of, but which she did not wish to ask of the King from his private funds. This letter being shown to M. Béranger, farmer-general, took effect; he thought himself fortunate in being able to render this assistance to his sovereign, and lost no time in sending the 200,000 francs to Madame de Villers. This first step was followed by some doubts, which he communicated to people better informed than himself of what was passing at court, and who added to his uneasiness: he then went to M. de Sartine, who unravelled the whole plot. The woman was sent to Saint Pélagie; and the unfortunate husband was ruined by replacing the sum borrowed, and paying for the jewels fraudulently purchased in the Queen's name: the forged letters were sent to her Majesty; I compared them, in her presence, with her real handwriting, and the only distinguishable difference was a little more regularity in the disposition of the letters.

This trick, discovered and punished with prudence and coolness, produced no more sensation out of doors than that of the Inspector Goupil.

If the spirit of independence, spread through the nation, had already shorn the throne of some of its

## THE DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC.

dazzling beams; if a party, formed in the very bosom of the court, was struggling to overthrow an Austrian princess, without reflecting that the blows aimed at her equally tended to shake the throne itself; it will, I must confess, be urged that it was the duty of that princess to watch her every step, and to render her conduct unassailable. But let not her youth, her inexperience, and her friendless situation be forgotten. No, she was not guilty. The Abbé de Vermond, who was always the Queen's sole guide, had the right to represent to her how important the consequences of her slightest levities might be, still did it not; and she continued, while on the throne, to seek the pleasures of private society, with increasing eagerness of taste.

A year after the nomination of the Princesse de Lamballe to the post of superintendent of the Queen's household, balls and quadrilles gave rise to the intimacy of her Majesty with the Comtesse Jules de Polignac.<sup>1</sup> This lady really interested Marie Antoinette. She was not rich, and generally lived upon her estate, at Claye. The Queen was astonished at not having seen her at court earlier. The confession, that her want of fortune had even prevented her appearance at the celebration of the marriages of the princes, added to the interest which she had inspired.

The Queen was full of sensibility, and took delight

<sup>1</sup> [Yolande Martine Gabrielle de Polastron, Duchesse de Polignac (1749–1793), married in 1767 Comte Jules de Polignac. In 1782 she succeeded the Princesse de Rohan-Guéméné as Governess to the Children of France. She was chief favourite among the ladies of the Queen, who loaded her and her family with wealth and honours. She died in Vienna.]

## THE DUCHESSÉ DE POLIGNAC

in counteracting the injustice of fortune. The countess was induced to come to court by her husband's sister, Madame Diana de Polignac, who had been appointed lady of honour to the Comtesse d'Artois. The Comtesse Jules actually loved a tranquil life; the impression she made at court affected her but little; she felt only the attachment manifested for her by the Queen. I had occasion to see her at the very commencement of her favour at court; she repeatedly passed an hour with me, while waiting for the Queen. She conversed with me freely and ingenuously, about all that she saw of honour, and at the same time of danger, in the kindness of which she was the object. The Queen sought for the sweets of friendship; but can this gratification, so rare in any rank, exist at all in its purity between a Queen and a subject, when they are surrounded, moreover, by snares laid by the artifices of courtiers? This very pardonable error was fatal to the happiness of Marie Antoinette, for happiness is not to be found in illusion.

The retiring character of the Comtesse Jules, afterwards Duchesse de Polignac, cannot be spoken of too favourably; I always considered her the victim of an elevation which she never sought: but if her heart was incapable of forming ambitious projects, her family and friends in her fortune beheld their own, and endeavoured permanently to fix the favour of the Queen.

The Comtesse Diana, sister of M. de Polignac,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Jules, Comte de Polignac, married in 1767 Yolande de Polastron, a lady-in-





*Duchesse de Polignac*



## THE DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC

and the Baron de Besenval<sup>1</sup> and M. de Vaudreuil,<sup>2</sup> particular friends of the Polignac family, made use of means, the success of which was infallible. One of my friends (the Comte Demoustier, who was in their secret) came to tell me that Madame de Polignac was about to quit Versailles suddenly; that she would take leave of the Queen only in writing; that the Comtesse Diana and M. de Vaudreuil had dictated her letter, and that the whole affair was arranged for the purpose of stimulating the hitherto unprofitable attachment of Marie Antoinette. The next day, when I went up to the palace, I found the Queen with a letter in her hand, which she was reading with much emotion: it was the letter from the Comtesse Jules; the Queen showed it to me. The countess expressed in it her grief at leaving a princess, who had loaded her with kindness. The narrowness of her fortune dictated the necessity for her doing so; but she was much more strongly impelled by the fear that the Queen's friendship, after having raised up dangerous enemies against her, might abandon her to their hatred, and to the regret of having lost the august favour of which she was then the object.

waiting of Marie Antoinette. Through his wife's influence with the Queen, Comte Jules, a mere colonel, was appointed First Equerry to the Queen, and in 1780 was created hereditary Duke of France. Two years later he was made Director-General of Posts. He fled from France with his wife and family in 1789, and died in Russia in 1817.]

<sup>1</sup> [Pierre Victor, Baron de Besenval (1722-1791), a Swiss officer who entered the French army, and rose to the rank of lieutenant-general. He is chiefly known by his *Mémoires*, published after his death.]

<sup>2</sup> [Louis Philippe de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil (1724-1802), a distinguished French naval officer.]

## THE DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC

This step produced the full effect that had been expected from it. A young and susceptible Queen cannot long bear the idea of contradiction. She determined, more firmly than ever, to settle the Comtesse Jules near herself, by making such a provision for her, as should place her beyond anxiety. Her disposition was just what the Queen liked; she had merely natural talents, no presumption, no affectation of knowledge. She was of the middling size; her complexion very fair, her eyebrows and hair dark brown, her teeth of dazzling whiteness, her smile enchanting, and her whole person beaming with grace. She disliked dress, and was seen almost always in an undress, remarkable only for its neatness and good taste; nothing upon her appeared placed with design, nor even with care. I do not think I ever once saw diamonds about her, even at the highest pitch of her fortune, and when she enjoyed the rank of duchess at court; I always thought that her sincere attachment for the Queen, as much as her love of simplicity, induced her to avoid everything that might raise a belief of her being a wealthy favourite. She had not one of the failings which usually accompany that title. She loved the persons who shared the Queen's affections, and was entirely free from jealousy. Marie Antoinette flattered herself that the Comtesse Jules and the Princesse de Lamballe would be her especial friends, and that she should possess a society formed after her own taste. "I will receive them in my closet, or at Trianon," said she: "I will enjoy the comforts



## THE DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC

of private life, which exist not for us, unless we have the resolution to secure them for ourselves." My memory faithfully recalls to me all the charms which so pleasing an illusion held out to the Queen, in a scheme, whereof she fathomed neither the impossibility nor the dangers. The happiness she thought to secure was only destined to cause her vexation. All those courtiers who were not admitted into this intimacy became so many jealous and vindictive enemies.

It was necessary to make a suitable provision for the countess. The place of first esquire, in reversion after the Comte de Tessé, being given to Comte Jules unknown to the holder, displeased the family of Noailles. This family had just sustained another mortification; the appointment of the Princesse de Lamballe having, in some degree, rendered necessary the resignation of the Comtesse de Noailles, whose husband was thereupon made a marshal of France. The Princesse de Lamballe, although she did not quarrel with the Queen, was alarmed at the establishment of the Comtesse Jules at court, and did not form, as her Majesty had hoped, a part of that intimate society which was composed in succession of Mesdames Jules and Diana de Polignac, d'Andlau, and de Chalon; and Messieurs de Guines,<sup>1</sup> de Coigny,<sup>2</sup> d'Adhé-

<sup>1</sup> [Adrien Louis de Bonnières, Comte, afterwards Duc de Guines (1735-1806), diplomatist, in 1768 was sent as ambassador to Berlin. In 1770 he was accredited ambassador to London, where he remained till 1776.]

<sup>2</sup> [Marie François Henri de Franquetot, Duc de Coigny (1737-1821), was created Marshal of France in 1816.]

## THE DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC

mar,<sup>1</sup> de Besenval, lieutenant-colonel of the Swiss, de Polignac, de Vaudreuil, and de Guiche:<sup>2</sup> the Prince de Ligne,<sup>3</sup> and the Duke of Dorset,<sup>4</sup> the English ambassador, were also admitted.

It was a long time before the Comtesse Jules maintained any great state at court. The Queen contented herself with giving her a fine suite of apartments at the top of the marble staircase. The subsistence of first esquire, the trifling emoluments derived from M. de Polignac's regiment, added to their slender patrimony, and perhaps some small pension, at that time formed the whole fortune of the favourite. I never saw the Queen make her a present of real worth; I was even astonished one day at hearing her Majesty mention, with pleasure, that the countess had gained ten thousand francs in the lottery: "She was in great need of it," added the Queen.

Thus it will be seen that the Polignacs were not settled at court in any degree of splendour which could justify the murmuring of others. The Noailles, however, had, perhaps, reason to feel hurt on the occasion. They had some right over the reversion after the Comte de Tessé: the restoration of the office

<sup>1</sup> [Marquis d'Adhémar was appointed Minister to Brussels in 1782. In 1785 he was sent as ambassador to England.]

<sup>2</sup> [Antoine Louis Marie, Duc de Gramont, afterwards Duc de Guiche (1755-1836), was made Lieutenant-General in 1789. He was the son-in-law of the Duc de Polignac.]

<sup>3</sup> [Karl Joseph, Prince de Ligne (1735-1814), an Austrian general, author of several works, including his own memoirs.]

<sup>4</sup> [John Frederick Sackville, third Duke of Dorset (1745-1799), was ambassador to Paris from 1783 to 1789.]

## COURT JEALOUSIES

of superintendent had been likewise mortifying to the Comtesse de Noailles, who, finding a superior set over her, had retired. This family, which had great weight at court, was not, however, the only one which the advancement of the Comte de Polignac rendered ill-disposed to Marie Antoinette. Whatever one courtier sees obtained by others, always appears to him a spoliation of his own property; that is a rule. In this instance, however, the substantial part of the favours bestowed upon the Polignacs was less envied than the intimacy which was about to establish itself between them and their dependants and the Queen. Within the circle of the Comtesse Jules, a door was seen opening to the acquisition of favour, places, and embassies. Those who had no hope of entering that circle were angry.

Madame de Polignac's drawing-room did Marie Antoinette much mischief; it increased the malice of her enemies. However, at the time I speak of, the society around the Comtesse Jules, fully engaged in strengthening the Queen's attachment for her, was far from interfering in serious matters, to which the young Queen indeed was yet a stranger. To gratify her was the leading object of all the favourite's friends. The Marquis de Vaudreuil was a conspicuous member of the circle of the Comtesse Jules; he was a shining wit, the friend and protector of the fine arts. He had a long line of *protégés* among men of letters and celebrated artists.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. de Vaudreuil was passionately fond of the arts and of literature: he pre-

## MARQUIS DE VAUDREUIL

The Baron de Besenval preserved all the plainness of the Swiss, to which he added all the cunning of

ferred encouraging them as an amateur, rather than as a man of consequence. He gave a dinner every week to a party consisting only of literary characters and artists. The evening was spent in a saloon furnished with musical instruments, pencils, colours, brushes, and pens; and everyone composed, or painted, or wrote, according to his taste or genius. M. de Vaudreuil himself pursued several of the fine arts. His voice was very pleasing, and he was a good musician. These accomplishments made him sought after, from his earliest entrance into society. The first time he visited Madame la Maréchale de Luxembourg, that lady said to him, after supper: "I am told, sir, that you sing very well. I should be delighted to hear you. But if you do oblige me so far, pray do not sing any fine piece — no cantata — but some street ballad — just a mere street song. I like a natural style — something lively — something cheerful." M. de Vaudreuil begged leave to sing a street ballad then much in vogue. He did not know that Madame la Maréchale de Luxembourg was, before her widowhood, Comtesse de Boufflers. He sang out with a full and sonorous voice the first line of the couplet beginning, "When Boufflers was first seen at court." The company immediately began coughing, spitting, and sneezing. M. de Vaudreuil went on: "Venus' self shone less beauteous than she did." The noise and confusion increased. But after the third line, "To please her all eagerly sought," M. de Vaudreuil, perceiving that all eyes were fixed upon him, paused. "Pray go on, sir," said Madame la Maréchale, singing the last line herself, "And too well in his turn each succeeded." M. de Besenval's remarks respecting Madame de Luxembourg render the anecdote plausible. But perhaps, in such a delicate dilemma, she may be considered as having given a proof of presence of mind, rather than of impudence.\*

M. de Vaudreuil succeeded in the world greatly by his wit and accomplishments. With women his conversation was very delightful and amusing, if we may credit an observation of the Princesse d'Henin, recorded by Madame Genlis, in her *Souvenirs de Félicie*:

"I saw Le Kain giving a lesson to a young theatrical debutant to-day. In the midst of his speech, the tyro seized the arm of his princess. Le Kain, displeased at the action, said to him, 'Sir, if you wish to appear in earnest,

\* The Marquis de Gouffler, who was present on this occasion, tells the story in a very different way. According to his version, the conversation turned on old Time's ravages on beauty, when M. de Vaudreuil said, turning towards Madame de Luxembourg, "As to you, madame, he has spared you — we still see that beauty which turned all the heads at court, and has been celebrated by our best poets." "Yes," said the old lady gaily, "I remember when I first came out, there were a few songs written in my praise. There was this, for instance —" and she began singing:

"When Boufflers was first seen at court,  
Venus' self shone less beauteous than she did. —  
To please her all eagerly sought" —

Here she stopped, and did not give the last line,

"And too well in his turn each succeeded."

"Go on, Madame la Maréchale," said de Vaudreuil. "Ah!" said she, smiling, "all that was so long ago that I remember no more of it."

The anecdote, thus told, clears both de Vaudreuil and the lady of the imputation of impudence cast upon them by the French editors. English Editor.



## IDLE CONVERSATION AT COURT

a French courtier. The fifty years he had numbered, and the grey hairs on his head, made him enjoy among women all that confidence inspired by maturity of age, although he had not quite given up the thoughts of love intrigues. He talked of his native mountains with enthusiasm. He would willingly, at any time, sing the *ranz-des-vaches* with tears in his eyes, and was the best story-teller in the Comtesse Jules's circle. The last new song, the repartee of the day, and the ordinary little tattling tales were the sole topics of conversation in the Queen's parties. Learning was proscribed in them. The Comtesse Diana, more inclined to literary pursuits than her sister-in-law, one day recommended her to read the Iliad and Odyssey. The latter replied, laughing, that she was perfectly acquainted with the Greek poet, and said, to prove it:

“*Homère était aveugle et jouait du hautbois.*”<sup>1</sup>

“*Homer was blind and played on the hautboy.*”

you must seem to be afraid of touching even the dress of the object of your affections.’

“What feeling, what delicate tact, this observation shows! This inestimable actor's performance always shows these qualities. Well might Madame d'Henin say, ‘I am acquainted with but two men who know how to converse with females, Le Kain and M. de Vaudreuil.’” *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> This lively repartee of the Duchesse de Polignac is a droll imitation of a line in the *Mercure Galant*. In the quarrel scene, one of the lawyers says to his brother quill:

“*Ton père était aveugle et jouait du hautbois.*”

“*Your father was blind and played on the hautboy.*”

It was impossible that the Duchesse de Polignac, with her wit and refined taste, should do otherwise than highly value learning; but the following anecdote conveys a poor idea of the education of some of the men admitted into her society:

“In 1781, the Duchesse de Polignac was pregnant; and in order to be nearer

## THE HOUSE OF POLIGNAC

The Queen found this sort of humour very much to her taste, and said that no pedant had ever been her friend.

The splendour of the House of Polignac was not at its height until several years after the period of which I have just spoken; and the Queen did not make a practice of spending a part of each day at the house of the duchess until the latter had succeeded the Princesse de Guéménée in the capacity of governess of the children of France, and the duke had become both superintendent of the post and first equerry.

Before the Queen fixed her assemblies at Madame de Polignac's she occasionally passed the evening at the house of the Duc and Duchesse de Duras; they

at hand to pay her respects to the Queen, she requested Madame de Boufflers to let her her house, called d'Auteuil, and famous for its gardens à l'Anglais. Madame de Boufflers, who was very fond of her country house, endeavoured to remain in it without disobliging the duchess, and replied in the following lines:

“ ‘ ‘ Around you all are sedulous to please;  
Your tranquil days roll on in cloudless ease;  
Empire to you is but the source of joy,  
Or if some grief awhile the charm destroy,  
Attentive courtiers, with assiduous art  
Banish the transient feeling from your heart.  
Far otherwise with me; if sorrows press,  
Here, lonely, no one shares in my distress;  
My only solace are these fragrant flowers,  
Whose rich perfumes beguile my heavy hours.’ ”

“ Madame de Polignac showed these lines, and her flatterers, thinking they were written by Madame de Boufflers, pronounced them good for nothing. Of course the decision of the duchess's friends was carried to Madame la Maréchale. ‘I am sorry then,’ said she, ‘for poor Racine; for the lines are his.’ ”

In fact, the lines will be found in *Britannicus*, Act ii, scene 3. They are addressed to Nero by Junia. Madame de Boufflers had merely made a slight alteration in the four last lines, where the name of Britannicus is introduced.

We take this anecdote from Grimm's *Correspondance*, vol. ii, p. 257. *Note by the Editor.*

## TRIFLING GAMES AT COURT

had always a brilliant party of young persons to meet her. They introduced a taste for trifling games, such as question and answer, *guerre panpan*, blindman's buff, and especially a game called *descampativos*.

The people of Paris, continually criticising, and at the same time constantly imitating the practices of the court, were infected with the mania for these childish sports. The rage for *descampativos* and *guerre panpan* extended to every house where many young women were assembled.

Madame de Genlis, in one of her plays, written with an intention to sketch the follies of the day, speaks of these famous *descampativos*; and also of the fashion of making a friend, called the *inseparable*, until a whim or the slightest difference might produce a total rupture.

## CHAPTER VII

THE Duc de Choiseul made his reappearance at court on the occasion of the ceremony of the King's coronation. The general wishes of the public on the subject gave his friends hopes of seeing him again in administration, or in the council of state; but these hopes were only of short duration. The opposite party was too firmly fixed at Versailles, and the young Queen's influence was outweighed in the mind of the King, by long-standing and lasting prejudices: she therefore gave up for ever, her attempt to reinstate the duke. Thus this princess, who has been described as so ambitious, and as so strenuously supporting the interest of the House of Austria, failed twice in the only scheme which could forward the views constantly attributed to her, and spent the whole of her reign, down to the first concussions of the Revolution, surrounded by the enemies of herself and her house.

Marie Antoinette took but little pains to promote literature and the fine arts. She had been rendered uncomfortable in consequence of having ordered the performance of "*Le Connétable de Bourbon*," on the celebration of the marriage of Madame Clotilde, the King's sister, with the Prince of Piedmont. The court and the people of Paris censured as indecorous, the naming of characters in the piece after the reigning family, and that with which the new alliance was formed.<sup>1</sup> The reading of this piece by the Comte de

<sup>1</sup> The *Connétable de Bourbon* was not, it must be admitted, a fit piece for per-



## AN ABSURD PRODUCTION

Guibert in the Queen's closet had produced in her Majesty's circle that sort of enthusiasm which unsettles and dissipates the judgment. She promised she would have no more readings. Yet, at the request of M. de Cubières, the King's *écuyer*, the Queen agreed to hear the reading of a comedy written by his brother. She collected her intimate friends, Messieurs de Coigny, de Vaudreuil, de Besenval, and Mesdames de Polignac, de Chalon, &c., and to increase the number of judges, she admitted the two Parnys, the Chevalier de Bertin,<sup>1</sup> my father-in-law, and myself. Molé<sup>2</sup> read for the author. I never could satisfy myself by what magic the skilful reader gained our unanimous approbation of a work equally bad and ridiculous. Surely the delightful voice of Molé, by awakening our recollection of the dramatic beauties of the French stage, prevented the wretched lines of Dorat Cubières from striking on our ears. I can assert that the words "beautiful! beautiful!" repeatedly interrupted

formance before all the French princes. It would create some surprise if the whole court should be found approving a composition in which the *connétable* of all things desires—

*"The rare pleasure of humbling a king."*

The Chevalier de Narbonne made some verses on this occasion, from which we select the following:

*"The constable pleases me well,  
We laugh and we yawn, and why, no one can tell;  
When to princes we play, we act under a spell;  
You know what I mean very well."*

*Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> The Chevalier de Parny was already known for his heroic poems, and the Chevalier de Bertin by some well-received verses. *Note by Madame Camfan.*

<sup>2</sup> An actor who was the delight of the Théâtre Français. He preceded Fleury, and took the same line of character. *Note by Madame Camfan.*

## NEW DRAMATIC WORKS

the reader. The piece was admitted for performance at Fontainebleau; and for the first time the King had the curtain dropped before the end of the play. It was called the "Dramomane" or "Dramaturge." All the characters died of poison mixed in a pie. The Queen, highly disconcerted at having recommended this absurd production, resolved once more never to hear another reading; and now she kept her word.

The tragedy of "Mustapha and Zéangir," by M. de Champfort,<sup>1</sup> was highly successful at the court theatre at Fontainebleau. The Queen procured the author a pension of 1200 francs, but his play failed on being performed at Paris.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of opposition which prevailed in that city delighted in ridiculing the opinions of the court. The Queen determined never again to give any marked countenance to new dramatic works. She reserved her patronage for musical composers alone, and in a few years their art arrived at a degree of perfection it had never before attained in France.

It was solely to gratify the Queen that the manager of the Opera collected the first company of comic

<sup>1</sup> [Sébastien Roch Nicolas Champfort (1714-1794), French author, whose tragedy *Mustapha et Zéangir* attracted the notice of Marie Antoinette. In 1781 he was elected member of the French Academy, and was soon after appointed secretary to Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister. During the Revolution he was librarian of the National Library.]

<sup>2</sup> [Grimm (*Correspondance littéraire*, vol. i, p. 471) is more flattering. While admitting the need of changes in the fifth act, he says that the nobility of the characters, and the purity of the style, reminded the auditors of the great days of the Théâtre Français. The Queen called Champfort to her box and announced the royal pension. The Prince de Condé also made him his secretary, at 2000 francs a year. This, however, was the only one of the new pieces, twelve in number, which was a success at the Fontainebleau fêtes.]

## THE OPERA AT COURT

actors at Paris. Glück, Piccini, and Sacchini were brought there in succession. These eminent composers, and particularly the first, were treated with great distinction at court. Immediately on his arrival in France, Glück<sup>1</sup> was admitted to the Queen's toilet, and she never ceased talking to him all the time he remained with her. She asked him one day whether he had nearly brought his grand opera of "Armide" to a conclusion, and whether it pleased him. Glück replied very coolly in his German accent, "Madame, it will soon be finished, and really it will be *sublime*." His opinion, thus roundly expressed, was confirmed; for the lyric stage surely never witnessed a more effective piece. There was a great outcry against the confidence with which the composer had spoken of his own production.<sup>2</sup> The Queen defended him warmly:

<sup>1</sup> [Christopher Glück (1714-1787), German composer, was music-master to the Archduchess Marie Antoinette in Vienna, who later, as Queen of France, strongly supported him in the musical factions by which Paris was torn during the latter half of the century. He was the composer of *Iphigenia*, *Alceste*, *Orpheus*, &c., and Dr. Burney called him the Michelangelo of music. In 1780 he retired to Vienna, where he ended his days.]

<sup>2</sup> Modesty was not one of Glück's virtues. Madame de Genlis, in her *Souvenirs*, says that he spoke of Piccini judiciously and plainly. "One cannot help feeling," adds she, "that he is equitable without ostentation. However, he said yesterday, that if Piccini's *Roland* succeeds, *he will do it over again*. This remark is striking, but it is of a nature that will never please me. It is so much more a proof of feeling to speak always with diffidence!"

Glück often had to deal with self-sufficiency, at least equal to his own. He was very reluctant to introduce long ballets into *Iphigenia*. Vestris deeply regretted that the opera was not terminated by a *chaconne*, in which that god of dance might display all his power. He complained to Glück about it. Glück, who treated his art just as it deserves, would make no other reply than that, in so interesting a subject, capering and dancing would be misplaced. Being pressed another time by Vestris, on the same subject, "A *chaconne*! a *chaconne*!" roared out the enraged musician, "we must describe the Greeks; and had the Greeks *chaconnes*?" "What? had they not?" returned the astonished dancer; "faith then, so much the worse for them!" *Note by the Editor.*



## THE OPERA AT COURT

she insisted that he could not be ignorant of the merit of his works; that he well knew they were generally admired, and that no doubt he was afraid lest a modesty, merely dictated by politeness, should look like affectation in him. The Queen did not confine her admiration to the lofty style of the French and Italian operas; our comic opera also pleased her much. She greatly valued Grétry's music, so well adapted to the spirit and feeling of the words that time has not yet diminished its charm. It is known that a great deal of the poetry set to music by Grétry is by Marmontel. The day after the first performance of "*Zemire et Azor*," Marmontel and Grétry were presented to the Queen in the gallery of Fontainebleau, as she was passing through it to go to mass. The Queen addressed all her compliments on the success of the new opera to Grétry; told him that during the night she had dreamed of the enchanting effect of the trio by Zemira's father and sisters behind the magic mirror; and then left them. Grétry, in a transport of joy, took Marmontel in his arms. "Ah! my friend," cried he, "excellent music may be made of this." "And execrable words," coolly observed Marmontel, to whom her Majesty had not addressed a single word.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All authors, whether poets or musicians, attached great importance to the performance of their works, upon the stage of Fontainebleau. Grimm gives us the key to this.

"It is to be observed that the court almost invariably confers some favour upon the authors of the pieces performed at Fontainebleau, and, which is a matter of still greater consequence, those pieces being no longer under the order of the usual repertory, may be performed at Paris, immediately after their performance at court. To this advantage may be attributed that importance attached to the privilege of being first judged of upon a stage where the result,



## MARIE ANTOINETTE & PICTURES

The Queen had no taste for pictures. The most indifferent artists were permitted to have the honour of painting her. A full-length portrait representing Marie Antoinette in all the pomp of royalty was exhibited in the gallery of Versailles. This picture, which was intended for the court of Vienna, was executed by a man who does not deserve even to be named, and disgusted all people of taste. It seemed as if this art, which is justly placed in the foremost rank of the fine arts, had, in France, retrograded several centuries. True it is, that Vanloo and Boucher had so corrupted the style of the French school, that with eyes accustomed to look only at the foreign and native masterpieces which now surround us, we can scarcely believe that Boucher's paintings could have been objects of admiration at a period so near the age of Louis XIV.

The Queen had not that enlightened judgment, nor even that mere taste, which in princes is sufficient to enable them to develop and protect great talents. She confessed frankly that she saw no merit in any portrait, beyond the likeness. When she went to the Louvre, on the exhibition of the pictures, she would

always uncertain, is never considered as definitively pronounced; for it is agreed that the public of Paris shall have an appellate jurisdiction over the judgments pronounced by the courtly public.

"And yet," continues Grimm, "it cannot be denied that the manner of judging adopted at court is very different from what it formerly was, now that it is allowable to applaud there as at other theatres. Formerly it was usual to listen in profound silence, and that silence, while it manifested much respect for the presence of their Majesties, left a vast uncertainty as to the feelings of the majority of the audience. Since the Queen has permitted this important point of etiquette to be overlooked, it very seldom happens that the public of Paris annuls the decisions at Fontainebleau." *Note by the Editor.*

## PORTRAITS OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

run hastily over all the little imitative subjects, and come out, as she acknowledged, without having once raised her eyes to the grander compositions.

There is no good portrait of the Queen, save that by Werthmüller, chief painter to the King of Sweden, which was sent to Stockholm; and that by Madame Le Brun, which was saved from the revolutionary fury by the commissioners for the care of the furniture at Versailles. In the composition of the latter picture, there reigns a striking analogy to that of Henrietta of France, the wife of the unfortunate Charles the First, painted by Vandyck. Like Marie Antoinette, she is seated, surrounded by her children, and that resemblance adds to the melancholy interest raised by this beautiful production.<sup>1</sup>

In admitting, with that candour which I will never lose sight of, that the Queen gave no direct encouragement to any art but that of music, I should be wrong to pass over in silence the patronage conferred by her and the princes, brothers of the King, on the art of printing.<sup>2</sup>

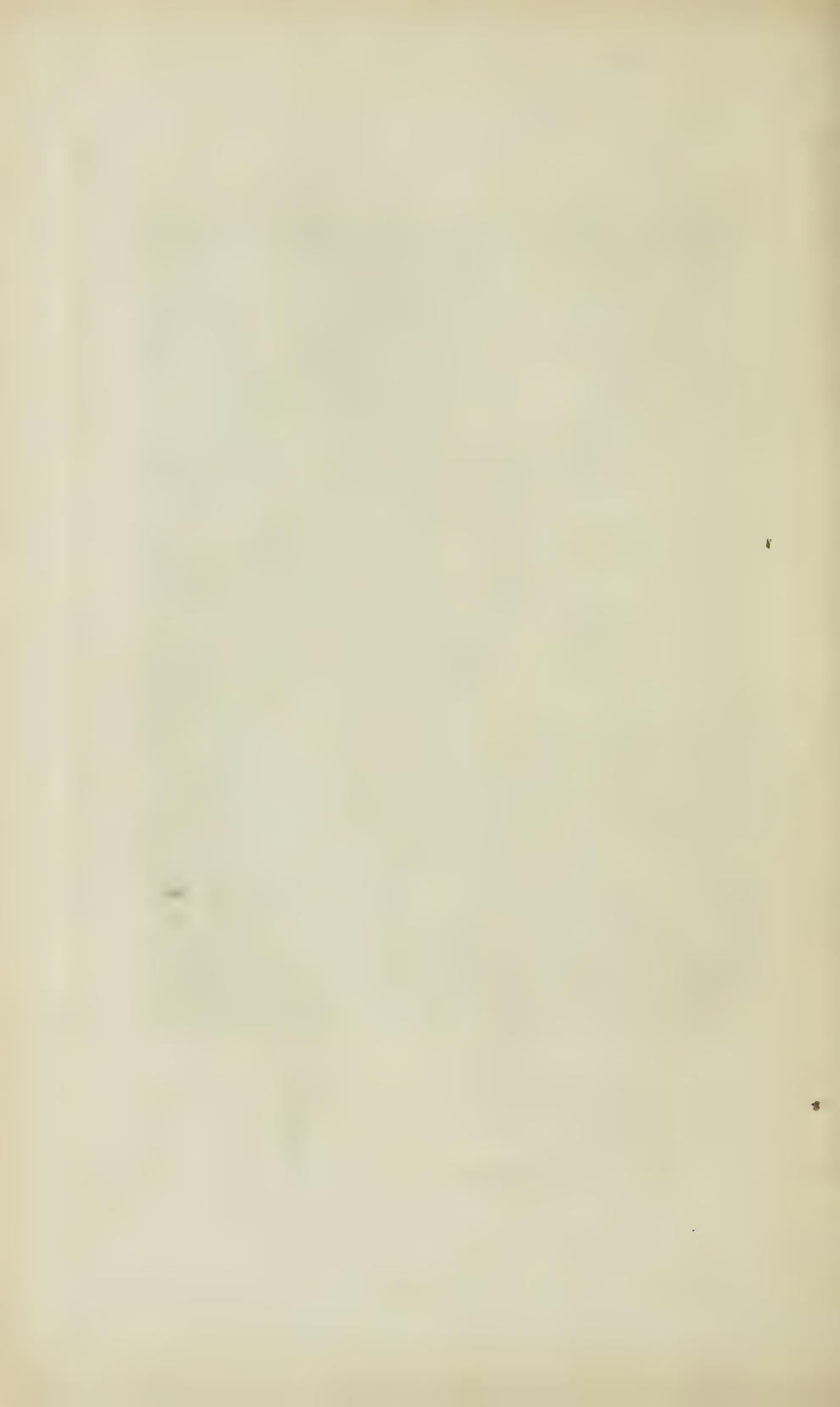
<sup>1</sup> [It is strange that Madame Campan omitted to mention the beautiful picture, known as "Marie Antoinette à la Rose," by Madame Vigée Le Brun, now at Versailles. It is nearly contemporary with the group to which she refers above.]

<sup>2</sup> The King looked with interest on the productions of an art so serviceable to literature. In 1790, that prince gave a proof of his particular good will to the bookselling trade. The following details of this are found in a work which appeared about that time.

"A company consisting of the first Parisian booksellers, being on the eve of stopping payment, succeeded in laying before the King a statement of their distressed situation. The monarch was affected by it; he condescended to take from the civil list the sum of which the society stood in immediate need, and became security for the re-payment of the remainder of the 1,200,000 livres



*Marie Antoinette*  
*(à la Rose)*





## M. DE SAINT-GERMAIN

To Marie Antoinette we are indebted for a splendid quarto edition of the works of Metastasio; to Monsieur, the King's brother, for a quarto Tasso, embellished with engravings after Cochin; and to the Comte d'Artois, for a small collection of select works, which is considered one of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the celebrated Didot's press.

In 1775, on the death of the Maréchal du Muy, the ascendancy of the sect of innovators occasioned the call of M. de Saint-Germain to court, that the important post of minister at war might be entrusted to him. His first care was the abolition of the King's military household establishment, which had been an imposing and effectual rampart round the sovereign power.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be observed, that at the period when the Chancellor Maupeou obtained the consent of Louis XV to the destruction of the Parliament, and the ban-

which they wanted to borrow. Louis XVI wrote with his own hand, the following letter to M. Necker, at that time his minister of finance:

“The interest I take in the welfare of this society, and of the numerous workmen they employ, as well in the country as in Paris, and who would have been out of work without prompt assistance (the *caisse d'escompte*, and other capitalists, to whom they have made application, being unable to help them), has induced me to advance them, as a loan, out of the funds of my civil list, the 50,000 crowns which they wanted indispensably on the 31st of last month. The same motive leads me to secure, upon the same fund, such sums as they may be able to procure, in order, with the 50,000 crowns which I have advanced them, to make up the sum of 1,200,000 livres, to be repaid in ten years, including my advance: for the re-payment of which, I fix no particular time. Saint Cloud, the 4th August, 1790. (*Signed*) Louis.”

*Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> [Madame Campan is here very unjust to St. Germain. The state of the finances necessitated the reduction of the showy and very expensive privileged corps composing the Maison du Roi. Even after his much needed reforms that body numbered 8000 men in the year 1789. See Duruy, *L'Armée royale en 1789*, p. 8.]

ishment of all the ancient magistrates, the *mousquetaires* were charged with the execution of the commission for this purpose; and that at the stroke of midnight, the presidents and members were all arrested, each by two *mousquetaires*.

In the spring of 1775, a popular insurrection had taken place, in consequence of the high price of bread. M. Turgot's new regulation, which permitted unlimited trade in corn, was either its cause or the pretence for it;<sup>1</sup> and the King's household troops had upon that occasion contributed mainly to the restoration of public tranquillity.

A great number of persons, enlightened by the disastrous events at the end of the reign of Louis XVI, have suspected M. de Saint-Germain of a treacherous confederacy in favour of schemes, formed long beforehand, it is true, by the enemies of good order; but by what fatality was the Queen drawn in to promote such objects? I could never discover the true cause of it, unless, indeed, in the marked favour shown to the captains and officers of the body-guards, who, in consequence of the reduction, became the only soldiers of their rank entrusted with the safety of the sovereign; or else in the Queen's strong prejudice against the Duc d'Aiguillon, then commander

<sup>1</sup> Economy and freedom were M. Turgot's two principles. At court he insisted chiefly on the application of the former. His numerous retrenchments offended the nobles and clergy.

A female relative of the minister once asked a bishop whether it was not allowable to keep Easter and the Jubilee at the same time. "Why, madame," replied the prelate, "we live in economical times — perhaps, we had better do so." *Note by the Editor.*

## GRAND FÊTE TO THE QUEEN

of the light horse. M. de Saint-Germain, however, retained fifty gendarmes and fifty light horse to form a royal escort on state occasions; but, in 1787, the King disbanded both these military bodies. The Queen then remarked, with evident satisfaction, that at last she should see no more red coats in the gallery of Versailles.<sup>1</sup>

From 1775 to 1781 the Queen passed the pleasantest part of her life, and that in which she indulged most in the gratifications which were presented to her on all sides. In the little journeys to Choisy, performances frequently took place at the theatre twice in one day: grand opera and French or Italian comedy at the usual hour; and, at eleven at night, parodies in which the best actors of the opera presented themselves in the most whimsical parts and costumes. The celebrated dancer Guimard always took the leading characters in the latter performance; she danced better than she acted; her extreme leanness, and her small hoarse voice, added to the burlesque in the parodied characters of Ernelinde and Iphigenie.

The most magnificent and complimentary fête ever given to the Queen was one prepared for her by Monsieur, the King's brother, at Brunoy. That prince did

<sup>1</sup> The Queen said to M. de Saint-Germain, "What will you do with the forty-four gendarmes and forty-four light horse that you keep up? Probably they are to escort the King to the beds of justice." "No, madame, they are to accompany him when *Te Deums* are sung." It must be understood that the Queen was for a total suppression, and for the King's being guarded at Versailles, as the Empress, her mother, and the Emperor are at Vienna; and that would have been plain and right. (*Secret Correspondence of the Court: Reign of Louis XVI.*) Note by the Editor.

## GRAND FÊTE TO THE QUEEN

me the honour to admit me there, and I followed her Majesty everywhere in the group that surrounded her. In roving about the gardens, she found in the first copse, knights in full armour asleep beneath the shade of trees, whence hung their spears and shields. The absence of the beauties who had incited the nephews of Charlemagne to lofty deeds is supposed to occasion this lethargic slumber. But the Queen appears at the entrance of the copse—they are on foot in an instant—melodious voices sing the cause of their disenchantment and their eagerness to signalise their skill and valour. They then hastened into a vast arena magnificently decorated in the exact style of the ancient tournaments.

Fifty dancers dressed as pages presented to the knights twenty-five superb black horses and twenty-five of a dazzling whiteness, all most richly caparisoned. The party led by Augustus Vestris wore the Queen's colours. Picq, ballet-master at the Russian court, commanded the opposing band. There was running at the black helmet, tilting, and lastly, desperate single combat, perfectly well imitated. Although the spectators were aware that the Queen's colours could not but be victorious, they did not less enjoy the various and prolonged sensations occasioned by the apparent uncertainty of the triumph.

Nearly all the agreeable women of Paris, who are always ready to enjoy spectacles of this description, were arranged upon the steps which surrounded the area of the tourney: this assemblage completed the



## LOVE OF PLEASURE

illusion. The Queen, surrounded by the royal family and the whole court, was placed beneath an elevated canopy. A play, followed by a ballet-pantomime and a ball, terminated the fête. Fire-works and illuminations were not spared. Finally, from a prodigiously high scaffold, placed on a rising ground, shouts of "Vive Louis!—Vive Marie Antoinette!" were sent forth in the air, in the midst of a very dark but calm night.

Pleasure was the sole pursuit of every one of this young family, with the exception of the King. Their love of it was perpetually encouraged by a crowd of those officious people who, by anticipating the desires, and even the passions of princes, find means of showing their zeal, and so hope to gain or secure favour for themselves.

Who would have dared, by cold or solid reasonings, to check the amusements of a Queen, young, lively, and handsome? A mother, or a husband, alone had the right to do it; and the King threw no impediment in the way of Marie Antoinette's inclinations. His long indifference had been followed by feelings of admiration and love. He was a slave to all the wishes of the Queen, who, delighted with the happy change in the mind and manners of the King, did not sufficiently conceal the satisfaction she felt at it, nor the ascendancy she was gaining over him.

The King went to bed every night at eleven precisely; he was very methodical, and nothing was allowed to interfere with his rules. He had not as yet

## THE QUEEN'S LATE HOURS

omitted, a single night, to share the nuptial bed: but the noise which the Queen unavoidably made when she returned very late from the evenings which she spent with the Princesse de Guéménée,<sup>1</sup> or the Duc de Duras, at last annoyed the King; and it was amicably agreed that the Queen should apprise him when she intended to sit up late. The King then began to sleep in his own apartment, which had never before happened from the time of their marriage.

During the winter the opera-balls beguiled many of the Queen's nights; she attended them with a single lady of the palace, and Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois were always there. Her people concealed their liveries under grey cloth great-coats. She always thought she was not recognised, while all the time she was known to the whole assembly from the first moment she entered the theatre: they pretended, however, not to recognise her, and some masquerade manœuvre was always adopted to give her the pleasure of fancying herself incognito.

Louis XVI determined once to accompany the Queen to a masked ball; it was agreed that the King should hold not only the *grand* but the *petit coucher*, as if actually going to bed. The Queen went to his apartment through the inner corridors of the palace, followed by one of her women with a black domino;

<sup>1</sup> [Victoire Armande de Rohan-Soubise, sister of the Prince de Condé, married her cousin, Henri Louis Marie, Prince de Rohan-Guéménée, in 1761. She was appointed Governess to the Children of France, but, on the disastrous bankruptcy of her husband, resigned the office, and was succeeded by the Duchesse de Polignac.]

## VISITS TO MASKED BALLS

she assisted him to put it on, and they went alone to the chapel court, where a carriage waited for them, with the captain of the guard on duty and a lady of the palace. The King was but little amused, spoke only to two or three persons, who knew him immediately, and found nothing to admire at the masquerade but punch and harlequin; which served as a joke against him for the royal family, who often amused themselves by laughing at him about it.

An event, very simple in itself, brought lamentable suspicion upon the conduct of the Queen. She was going out one evening with the Duchesse de Luynes, lady of the palace: her carriage broke down at the entrance into Paris; she was obliged to alight; the duchess led her into a shop, while a footman called a *fiacre*. As they were masked, if they had but known how to keep silence the event would never have been known; but to ride in a *fiacre* is an adventure so whimsical for a Queen, that she had hardly entered the opera-house when she could not help saying to some persons whom she met there: "That I should be in a *fiacre*; is it not droll?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The amusement of the masquerade, the desire which the Queen felt at least to enjoy there the incognito, under the mask, must have given rise to a number of those adventures which form one of the pleasures attached to disguise of that sort, and which the presence of a third person always renders innocent. The following anecdote appears in a work of the time.

"An adventure, which took place at the masked ball given by the Comte de Viry, is whispered about; it was as follows: After the banquet the Queen withdrew with her suite, and returned shortly afterwards masked, to the ball. At three o'clock in the morning she was walking with the Duchesse de la Vauguion: the two masks were accosted by a young foreign nobleman who was unmasked, and who conversed with them a long time, taking them for two women of quality with whom he was acquainted. The mistake gave rise to a singular conversation which amused her Majesty the more, inasmuch as



## CONSEQUENCES OF LEVITY

From that moment all Paris was informed of the adventure of the *fiacre*: it was said that everything connected with that night-adventure was mysterious; that the Queen had kept an appointment, in a private house, with a nobleman honoured by her kindness; the Duc de Coigny was openly named. He was indeed very well received at court, but equally so by the King and Queen. These suppositions of gallantry once set afloat, there were no longer any bounds to all the foolish conjectures of the gossips of the day, and still less to the calumnies circulated at Paris respecting the Queen: if, during the chase, or at cards, she spoke to Lord Edward Dillon, de Lambertye, or others whose names I cannot at this moment bring to my recollection, they were so many favoured lovers. The people of Paris did not know that none of those young persons were admitted into the Queen's private circle of friends, nor had even any claim to

the topics were light and agreeable without being indiscreet. Two gentlemen in masks came up and joined the party; after laughing a good deal together they separated. The two ladies intimated a desire to withdraw; the German baron conducted them; a very plain carriage drew up: when they were about to enter it Madame de la Vauguyon unmasked. Judge of the stranger's surprise, and how it increased, when, on turning round, he also recognised the other lady, who had likewise unmasked: respect and a kind of confusion succeeded to familiarity. The affability of the charming princess, however, reassured the foreigner, who, besides, had had the advantage of paying his court to her Majesty, and being known to her. The raillery with which he had to reproach himself was only such as the mask sanctions, especially in France. The Queen recommended secrecy, and left him. He complied no doubt, but to little purpose, as two or three spectators who were there by accident, were not equally discreet. The foreigner, however, who was finely formed, amiable, and of exalted birth, well deserved the favour fortune threw in his way. Meeting the Queen a few days afterwards, she asked him if he had kept her secret, in a tone which showed that she did not consider it of the slightest importance." (*Secret Correspondence of the Court: Reign of Louis XVI.*)  
*Note by the Editor.*



## CONSEQUENCES OF LEVITY

be introduced there; but the Queen went about Paris in disguise, and had made use of a *fiacre*. Unfortunately a single instance of levity gives room for the suspicion of others, and ill-disposed persons do not hesitate to presume that which could not really take place. Kept at ease by the consciousness of innocence, and well knowing all about her must do justice to her private life, the Queen spoke of these false reports with contempt, contenting herself with the supposition that some vain folly in the young men above mentioned had given rise to them. She therefore left off speaking to them, or even looking at them. Their vanity took the alarm at this, and the pleasure of revenge induced them either to say, or to leave others to think, that they were unfortunate enough to please no longer. Other young coxcombs, placing themselves near the private box which the Queen occupied incognito when she attended the public theatre at Versailles, had the presumption to imagine that they were noticed by her; and I have known such notions entertained merely on account of the Queen requesting one of those gentlemen to inquire behind the scenes whether it would be long before the commencement of the second piece.

The list of persons received into the Queen's closet, which I have given above ( Chapter VI ), was placed in the hands of the gentlemen ushers of the chamber by the Princesse de Lamballe: and the persons there enumerated were to present themselves to enjoy the distinction, on those days whereon the Queen chose

## THE DUC DE LAUZUN

to be with her intimates in a private manner, and on no other; and this was only after she had been confined, or when she was slightly indisposed. People of the first rank at court sometimes requested audiences of her; the Queen then received them in a room within that called the wardrobe-women's closet, and these women announced whoever was coming into her Majesty's apartment.

I was one day in this cabinet when the Duc de Lauzun passed through it, after an occurrence which requires some explanation.

The Duc de Lauzun<sup>1</sup> (since Duc de Biron), who made himself conspicuous in the Revolution, among the associates of the Duc d'Orléans, has left behind him some manuscript Memoirs, in which he insults the name of Marie Antoinette. He relates one anecdote respecting a heron's plume. The following is the true history of the matter.

The Duc de Lauzun had a good deal of original wit, and something chivalrous in his manners. The Queen was accustomed to see him at the King's suppers, and at the house of the Princesse de Guéménée, and always showed him attention. One day he made his appearance at Madame de Guéménée's in uniform, and with the most magnificent plume of white heron's feathers that it was possible to behold. The Queen admired the plume, and he offered it to her through

<sup>1</sup> [Armand Louis de Gontaut, Duc de Lauzun, afterwards Duc de Biron (1747-1793), was appointed General-in-chief of the Army of the Rhine in 1792. He defeated the Vendéans in 1793 and, on resigning his command, was guillotined in the same year.]

## THE DUC DE LAUZUN

the Princesse de Guéménée. As he wore it, the Queen had not imagined that he could think of giving it to her; much embarrassed with the present which she had, as it were, drawn upon herself, she did not dare to refuse it, nor did she know whether she ought to make one in return. Afraid, if she did give anything, of giving either too much or too little, she contented herself with wearing the plume once, and letting M. de Lauzun see her adorned with the present he had made her. In his secret Memoirs the duke attaches importance to his present of the aigrette, which proves him utterly unworthy of an honour accorded only to his name and rank.

His vanity magnified the value of the favour done him. A short time after the present of the heron plume he solicited an audience; the Queen granted it, as she would have done to any other nobleman of equal rank. I was in the room adjoining that in which he was received; a few minutes after his arrival the Queen opened the door, and said aloud, and in an angry tone of voice, "Go, sir." M. de Lauzun bowed low, and withdrew. The Queen was much agitated. She said to me, "That man shall never again come within my doors." A few years before the Revolution of 1789 the Maréchal de Biron died. The Duc de Lauzun, heir to his name, aspired to the important post of colonel of the regiment of French guards. The Queen, however, procured it for the Duc du Châtelet: such is often the origin of the most implacable hatred. The Duc de Biron espoused the cause of the

## INFAMOUS ACCUSATIONS

Duc d'Orléans, and became one of the most violent enemies of Marie Antoinette.<sup>1</sup>

It is with reluctance that I enter very minutely on a defence of the Queen against two infamous accusations with which libellers have dared to swell their envenomed volumes. I mean the unworthy suspicions of too strong an attachment for the Comte d'Artois, and of the motives for the close friendship which subsisted between the Queen, the Princesse de Lamballe, and the Duchesse de Polignac. I do not believe that the Comte d'Artois was, during the earlier years of his own youth, and that of the Queen, so much smitten, as has been said, with the beauty and loveliness of his sister-in-law; but I can affirm that I always saw that prince maintain the most respectful distance towards the Queen; that she always spoke of him, of his good-nature and his cheerfulness, with that freedom which never attends any other than the purest sentiments, and that none of those about the

<sup>1</sup> The Memoirs of the Duc de Lauzun, still in manuscript while Madame Campan was compiling hers, have since been published. They were penned by the Duc de Lauzun at the solicitation of the Duchesse de Fleury, daughter of the Duc de Coigny, a woman whose wit, grace, and beauty were justly extolled. The edition which has appeared does not contain the anecdote of the heron plume. Did this arise from reserve on the part of the editors, or hiatus in the manuscript? Be this as it may, we have a manuscript which details this anecdote at full length, and we do not hesitate to publish it (Note XIII, p. 297). At this day, when the account given by Madame Campan contradicts that of the Duc de Lauzun; at this day, when his presumptuous, selfish, and foolish character is known, what he says may retain its malignity, but must go uncredited. We now see in his Memoirs nothing more than the false and despicable insinuations of a coxcomb deceived in his expectation, and whose wounded vanity seeks a revenge unworthy of a man of honour. *Note by the Editors.*

A complete edition of these Memoirs was published by L. Lacour, Paris, 1858, 1 volume. *Note by F. M. Graves.*





CHARLES PHILIPPE de FRANCE.  
Comte d'Artois, Brother of the King.  
He is Present at the Court, &c.

CHARLES PHILIPPE of FRANCE.  
Comte d'Artois, Brother of the King.  
Present at the Court, &c.

*Comte d'Artois*



## INFAMOUS ACCUSATIONS

Queen ever saw in the affection she manifested towards the Comte d'Artois more than that of a kind and tender sister for her youngest brother. As to the intimate connection between Marie Antoinette and the ladies I have named, it never had, nor could have, any other motive than the very innocent wish to secure for herself two "friends" in the midst of a numerous court: and notwithstanding this intimacy, that tone of dignified respect observed by persons of the most exalted rank towards royal majesty, was never forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This testimony is confirmed by an historian, the following extract from whom will certainly be read with interest:

"We shall have occasion to quote a few fragments of letters, from which an idea of the strict friendship that united the Queen and the Duchesse de Polignac may be drawn. Suffice for the present the following note written by the Queen to the duchess, in answer to a letter in which the latter, after an illness that had confined her a few days in Paris, wrote to the Queen that she should soon have the honour of paying her respects to her:

"I am doubtless more impatient for our meeting than you, for to-morrow I shall come and dine with you at Paris."

"And in fact the Queen did go and dine with her friend. — It must be confessed that this strict friendship between a sovereign and a subject appears the more extraordinary as being utterly unexampled. However, that it did exist cannot be denied: unprincipled people, therefore, had no other course to pursue than to suppose a criminal motive for this friendship; and they succeeded but too well.

"When the real scheme of dethroning the unfortunate Louis XVI was once determined on, it was thought proper to begin by degrading him; the most efficacious way to do which was to attack the morals of the Queen. It was also essential to the success of this infernal plot that the Duchesse de Polignac should be lowered in public opinion, before the princess herself was attacked. For if the duchess could be made to appear deserving of universal contempt, the opprobrium cast on her would stain her august friend also.

"Libels against Madame de Polignac, therefore, were not spared. The author of this history has been often asked whether he had read those libels? and who, unfortunately, has not? but he, in his turn, demanded that those who wrote them should own them, and produce their proofs. He was never answered; and all intelligent persons who were well acquainted with the Duc and Duchesse de Polignac appeared to him convinced that the authors of those libels were vile calumniators, hired by the enemies of the King and Queen. He even interrogated the duchess's servants, who had nothing more to hope

## THE ABBÉ RETIRES AND RETURNS

The Queen, entirely occupied with the society of Madame de Polignac, and amusements which succeeded each other in an unbroken series, had, for some time, found but little leisure for the Abbé de Vermond; he, therefore, resolved to retire from court. The world did him the honour to believe that he had hazarded remonstrances upon his august pupil's frivolous employment of her time, and that both as an ecclesiastic and as instructor, he was now, when at court, out of his place; but the world deceived itself: his dissatisfaction arose purely from the favour shown to the Comtesse Jules. After a fortnight's absence, we saw him at Versailles again, resuming his usual functions. I will relate, by and by, his motives for absenting himself, and the conditions for which he stipulated upon his return.

for from their mistress; and their answers proved that she was beloved by her people, and that in the bosom of her family she led the most decorous and regular life.

"In short, the author has not met with a single person who had ever even received the slightest offence from the Duc de Polignac or his duchess. Having to decide between grave accusations, altogether unsupported by any kind of evidence, on the one hand, and indisputable facts on the other, he was naturally bound to pronounce for the latter. His character of an historian did not admit of his doing otherwise." (*History of Marie Antoinette*, by Montjoie.)  
*Note by the Editor.*



## CHAPTER VIII

FROM the time of Louis XVI's accession to the throne, the Queen had been expecting a visit from her brother, the Emperor Joseph II. That prince was the constant theme of her discourse. She boasted of his intelligence, his love of occupation, his military knowledge, and the perfect simplicity of his manners. Those about her Majesty ardently wished to see at Versailles a prince so worthy of his rank. At length the coming of Joseph II, under the title of Comte Falkenstein, was announced, and the very day on which he would be at Versailles was mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The first interview between the Queen and her august brother took place in the presence of all the Queen's household. It was extremely affecting; the feelings of nature excite the strongest interest, when displayed by sovereigns in all their unrestrained force.

The Emperor was at first generally admired in France; learned men, well-informed officers, and celebrated artists felt the great extent of his information. He made less impression at court, and very little in the private circle of the King and Queen. His manners were eccentric, his frankness often degenerated into rudeness, and his simplicity appeared evidently

<sup>1</sup> The Queen received the Emperor at Versailles, and did not go to meet him in a cabriolet, as is said in some of the collections of anecdotes respecting the court of Louis XVI; especially in a very respectable work in which this false anecdote is inserted; as it is likewise in the *English Spy*, from which it was probably taken. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## EMPEROR JOSEPH II

affected; all these characteristics caused him to be looked upon as a prince rather singular than admirable. The Queen spoke to him about the apartment she had prepared for him in the castle; the Emperor answered that he would not accept of it, and that while travelling he always lodged at a "public house" (that was his very expression): the Queen insisted, and assured him that he should be at perfect liberty, and placed out of the reach of noise. He replied, that he knew the castle of Versailles was extensive enough, and that he might claim a place there, as well as any of the numerous "blackguards" who were lodged in it; but that his *valet de chambre* had made up his camp-bed in a ready-furnished house, and there he would lodge.<sup>1</sup>

He dined with the King and Queen, and supped with the whole family assembled together. He appeared to take an interest in the young Princesse Elizabeth, then just past childhood, and blooming in all the freshness of that age. A report of an intended marriage between him and this young sister of the King was circulated at the time, but I believe it had no foundation in truth.

The table continued still to be served by females only, when the Queen dined in private with the King,

<sup>1</sup> [The Emperor Joseph II arrived on April 18, 1777, and stayed at the Hôtel de Tréville, Rue de Tournon. The Queen relates that the King and she were highly entertained by his frankness. Louis XVI generally laughed and said nothing; but once, when Joseph advocated strong measures towards the clergy, he retorted firmly that however those methods succeeded in other States, of which he doubted, they certainly would not succeed in France. (*Correspondance de Marie Antoinette*, p. 93.)]

## INDISCREET CRITICISM

the royal family, or crowned heads.<sup>1</sup> I was present at the Queen's dinner almost every day. The Emperor would there say a great deal, and fluently; he expressed himself in our language with facility, and the singularity of his expressions added a zest to his conversation. I have often heard him say that he liked "spectaculous" objects, when he meant to express such things as formed a show, or a scene worthy of interest. He disguised none of his prejudices upon the subject of the etiquette and customs of the court of France, and even in the presence of the King made these the subject of his sarcasms.<sup>2</sup> The King smiled,

<sup>1</sup> The custom was, that even supposing dinner to have commenced, if a princess of the blood arrived, and she was asked to sit down at the Queen's table, the comptrollers and gentlemen-in-waiting came immediately to attend, and the Queen's women withdrew. These had succeeded the maids of honour in several parts of their service, and had preserved some of their privileges. One day the Duchesse d'Orléans arrived at Fontainebleau, at the Queen's dinner-hour. The Queen invited her to the table, and herself motioned to her women to leave the room, and let the men take their places. Her Majesty said she was resolved to continue a privilege which kept places of that description honourable, and rendered them a fit resort for ladies of nobility without fortune.

Madame de Misery, Baronne de Biache, the Queen's first lady-of-the-chamber, to whom I was made reversioner, was a daughter of M. the Comte de Chemant, and her grandmother was a Montmorency. M. the Prince de Tingry, in the presence of the Queen, used to call her "cousin."

The ancient household of the kings of France conferred prerogatives acknowledged in the state. Many of the offices were tenable only by those of noble blood, and were sold at from 40,000 to 300,000 francs. A collection of edicts of the kings in favour of the prerogatives and right of precedence of the persons holding office in the king's household is still in existence. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> Joseph II had a taste, or perhaps we may say, a talent for satire. A collection of his letters has just been published, in which his bitter raillery spares neither the nobility nor the clergy, nor even his brother kings. Two or three of these letters will be found at the end of this volume (Note XIV, p. 299); they belong to the subject treated of by Madame Campan, since they add a few touches more to the picture of Joseph II.

His caustic humour found, however, fair game in the etiquette observed at the court of France. If we wish to form an idea of this tyranny, which annoyed princely personages every instant of the day, and followed them in



## INDISCREET CRITICISM

but never made any answer; the Queen appeared to feel pain from them. The Emperor frequently terminated his observations upon the objects in Paris, which he had admired, by reproaching the King for suffering himself to remain in ignorance of them. He could not conceive how such rich treasures of art should remain shut up, in the dust of immense depositories;<sup>1</sup> and told him one day, that but for the practice of placing some of them in the apartments of Versailles, he would not know even the principal *chefs-d'œuvre* he possessed.<sup>2</sup> He also reproached him for not having visited the Hôtel des Invalides, nor the military school; and even went so far as to tell him before us, that he ought not only to know what Paris contained, but to travel in France, and reside a few days in each of his large towns.

At last the Queen was really hurt at the Emperor's indiscreet sincerity, and gave him a few lectures upon the thoughtlessness with which he allowed himself to lecture others. One day she was busied in signing warrants and orders for payment for her household, and was conversing with M. Augeard, her secretary for such matters, who presented the papers one

a manner, even to the nuptial bed, we must read a curious paper inserted by Madame Campan among the Historical Illustrations which she intended for her work (p. 255). *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after the Emperor's departure, the Comte d'Angivillers laid before the King plans for the erection of the Museum, which was then begun. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor loudly censured the practice existing at that time, of allowing shopkeepers to erect shops near the outward walls of all the palaces, and to establish something like a fair upon the staircases in the galleries of Versailles and Fontainebleau, and even up to each landing-place of the great staircases. *Note by Madame Campan.*



## INDISCREET CRITICISM

after another to be signed, and replaced them in his portfolio. While this was going forward the Emperor walked about the room; all at once he stood still, to reproach the Queen rather severely for signing all those papers without reading them, or, at least, without running her eye over them; and he spoke most judiciously to her upon the danger of signing her name inconsiderately. The Queen answered, that very wise principles might be very ill applied; that her secretary for orders, who deserved her implicit confidence, was at that moment laying before her nothing but orders for payment of the quarter's expenses of her household, registered in the Chamber of Accounts; and that she ran no risk of giving her signature for any improper design.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen's toilet was likewise a never-failing subject for animadversion with the Emperor. He blamed her for having introduced too many new fashions, and teased her about her use of rouge, to which his eyes could not accustom themselves. One day, while she was laying on more of it than usual, before going to the play, he advised her to put on still more; and pointing out a lady who was in the room, and was, in truth, highly painted, "A little more under the eyes," said the Emperor to the Queen: "lay on the rouge like a fury, as that lady does." The Queen entreated her brother to cease observations of this

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is confirmed by the information Madame Campan gives respecting the order established in the accounts relating to the funds belonging to the Queen's privy purse. (See *Historical Illustrations*, p. 260.) *Note by the Editor.*

## INDISCREET CRITICISM

sort, and, at all events, to address them, when they were so severe, to her alone. This manner of criticising established fashions and customs agreed very well with the sneering spirit which then prevailed; otherwise the Emperor would have been generally blamed. Those who from principle adhered to the ancient customs were the only persons displeased, and were indeed much offended with him for his misplaced frankness.

The Queen had made an appointment to meet him at the Italian theatre; her Majesty changed her mind, and went to the French theatre. She sent a page to the Italian theatre, to request her brother to come to her. The Emperor left his box, lighted by the comedian Clairval, and attended by M. de la Ferté, comptroller of the Queen's privy purse, who was much hurt at hearing his Imperial Majesty, after condescendingly expressing his regret at not being present during the Italian performance, say to Clairval, "Your young Queen is very giddy; but, luckily, you Frenchmen have no great objection to that."

I was with my father-in-law in one of the Queen's apartments, when the Emperor came to wait for her there, and knowing that M. Campan did the duty of librarian, he conversed with him about such books as would, of course, be found in the Queen's library. After talking of our most celebrated authors, he casually said, "There are doubtless no works on finance, or on administration here."

These words were followed by his opinion on all

## IMPERIAL GOSSIP

that had been written on those topics, and the differing systems of our two famous ministers, Sully and Colbert; on the errors which were daily committed in France, in points so essential to the prosperity of the empire; and on the reform he himself would make at Vienna, as soon as he should be able. Holding M. Campan by the button, he spent more than an hour talking vehemently, and without the slightest reserve, about the French government. This was certainly wrong, for the Emperor should have conversed with the secretary-librarian only upon matters connected with his office, if he had consulted delicacy and dignity. But he was so full of self-sufficiency respecting the science of government, that he fell into this childish error. He talked nearly an hour. My father-in-law and myself continued in profound silence, as much from astonishment as from respect; and when we were alone, we agreed not to speak of this interview.

The Emperor was fond of telling secret anecdotes of the Italian courts he had visited; the jealous quarrels between the King and Queen of Naples amused him highly: he described to the life the manner and speech of that sovereign, and the simplicity with which he used to go and solicit the first chamberlain to obtain permission to return to the nuptial bed, when the angry Queen had banished him from it. The time which he was made to wait for this reconciliation was calculated between the Queen and her chamberlain, and always proportioned to the gravity of the offence. He also related several very amusing stories relative to

## IMPERIAL GOSSIP

the court of Parma, of which he spoke with no little contempt. If what this prince said of those courts, and even of Vienna, had been written down from day to day, the whole would have formed a very interesting collection. I recollect but one anecdote which calls to mind the infatuation of Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, for the system of the economists, and gives an idea of the judgment the Emperor had formed of him. The Emperor related to the King that the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the King of Naples being together, the former said a great deal about the changes he had effected in his state. The grand duke had issued a vast number of new edicts, in order to carry the precepts of the economists into execution, and trusted that in so doing, he was labouring for the welfare of his people. The King of Naples suffered him to go on speaking for a long time, and then merely asked him how many Neapolitan families there were in Tuscany. The duke soon reckoned them up, as they were but few. "Well, brother," replied the King of Naples, "I do not understand the indifference of your people towards this said welfare; for I have four times the number of Tuscan families settled in my states that you have of Neapolitan families in yours."

The Queen being at the opera with the Emperor, the latter did not wish to show himself; but she took him by the hand, and with a little gentle force drew him forward to the first row of the box. This presentation to the public was most warmly received. The performance was "Iphigenia in Aulis," and for



## FÊTE AT PETIT TRIANON

the second time the chorus, "Chantons, célébrons notre Reine!" was called for with the greatest ardour, and sung in the midst of universal plaudits.

A fête of a novel description was given at Petit Trianon. The art with which the English garden was lighted—not illuminated—produced a charming effect: earthen lamps, concealed by painted green boards, threw light upon the beds of shrubs and flowers, and brought out their several tints in the most varied and pleasing manner. Several hundred burning faggots in the moat behind the temple of Love, kept up a blaze of light which rendered that spot the most brilliant in the garden. After all, this evening's entertainment had nothing remarkable about it beyond that for which it was indebted to the good taste of the artists; yet it was much talked of. The situation did not allow the admission of a great part of the court; those who were uninvited were dissatisfied; and the people, who never forgive any fêtes but those they share in, considerably added to the exaggeration of malevolence as to the cost of this little fête, which was carried on to so ridiculous a height as to make it appear that the faggots burnt in the moat required the destruction of a whole forest. The Queen being informed of these reports, was determined to know exactly how much wood had been consumed; and she found that fifteen hundred faggots had sufficed to keep up the fire until four o'clock in the morning.

The Emperor left France after staying a few

## EMPEROR JOSEPH'S DEPARTURE

months, and promised his sister to come and see her again.<sup>1</sup>

All the officers of the Queen's chamber had taken many opportunities of serving him during his stay, and expected that he would make presents before his departure. Their oath of office positively forbade that they should ever receive a gift from any foreign prince; they had therefore agreed to refuse the Emperor's presents at first, but to ask the time necessary for obtaining permission to accept them. The Emperor, probably informed of this custom, relieved the good people from the difficulty of getting themselves released from their oath; for he set off without making a single present.

The Comtesse d'Artois already had two children, while the Queen had not even a hope of giving heirs to the throne. There were many secret conjectures respecting the obstacles which could have so long opposed this. At last, about the latter end of 1777, the Queen being alone in her closet, sent for my father-in-law and myself, and giving us her hand to kiss, told us, that looking upon us both as persons deeply interested in her happiness she wished to receive our congratulations; that at length she really was the Queen of France, and that she hoped soon to have children; that up to that moment she had concealed her grief, but that she had shed many tears in secret.

<sup>1</sup> [That Louis XVI liked Joseph II is clear from the Queen's statement in a letter of August 27, 1777, that he spoke highly of him, and urged him to come again. Madame Campan's stories about him are probably a little overdrawn — *à la française*.]

## VOLTAIRE'S RETURN TO PARIS

We have calculated and found that she was brought to bed of Madame, daughter of the King, exactly a year after the confidence she had deigned to repose in us. This tardy consummation was not made public.

Dating from this long-delayed but happy moment, the King's attachment to the Queen assumed every characteristic of love; the good Lassone, first physician to the King and Queen, frequently spoke to me of the uneasiness that the King's indifference, the cause of which he had been so long in overcoming, had given him, and appeared to me at that time to entertain anxiety of a very different description.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter of 1778 the King's permission for the return of Voltaire after an absence of twenty-seven years was obtained. A few austere or cautious persons considered this condescension on the part of the court as very injudicious. The Emperor, on leaving France, passed by Ferney, and did not think fit to stop there. He had advised the Queen not to suffer Voltaire to be presented to her. A lady belonging to the court learned the Emperor's opinion on that point, and reproached him with his want of enthusiasm towards the greatest genius of the age: he replied, that for the good of the people he should always endeavor

<sup>1</sup> [It is now known that the journey of Joseph II to France was largely for the purpose of inducing Louis XVI to submit to an operation which he had long deferred. It took place late in May, or early in June, 1777, soon after the departure of Joseph II from Versailles. The Queen, on August 27, 1777, wrote to her mother stating her feelings almost of envy at the *accouchement* of her sister, the Queen of Naples; but on September 10 she wrote expressing her hope of becoming a mother. See Belloc's *Marie Antoinette*, Appendix A.]

## REFUSAL TO SEE VOLTAIRE

our to profit by the knowledge of the philosophers; but that his own business of sovereign would always prevent him ranking himself amongst the adepts of that sect. The clergy, also, took steps to hinder Voltaire's appearance at court. Paris, however, carried the honours paid to the great poet to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. It was highly imprudent to give the people of Paris an opportunity of showing with how much pleasure they could maintain an opinion contrary to that of the court. This was pointed out to the Queen, and she was told, that without conferring on Voltaire the honour of a presentation she might see him in the state apartments. She was not very averse to following this advice, and appeared embarrassed solely about what she should say to him in case of consenting to see him. She was recommended to talk to him about nothing but the "*La Henriade*," "*Merope*," and "*Zaïre*." The Queen told those who had taken the liberty to make these observations to her, that she would still consult a few other persons in whom she had great confidence. The next day she gave for answer, that it was irrevocably decided Voltaire should not see any member of the royal family—his writings being full of principles which aimed too directly at religion and morals. "It is, however, strange," said the Queen, as she gave this answer, "that while we refuse to admit Voltaire into our presence, as the leader of philosophical writers, Madame la Maréchale de Mouchy,<sup>1</sup> with all the intriguing disposition of the

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 45.]



## DE BESENVAL'S INSINUATIONS

sect, should have presented to me, some years ago, Madame Geoffrin,<sup>1</sup> who owed her celebrity to the title of foster-mother of the philosophers."

When the intended duel of the Comte d'Artois with the Prince de Bourbon (*sic*) was known, the Queen determined to see the Baron de Besenval, who was to be one of the persons present at the meeting, privately, in order to communicate the King's intentions: I read, with infinite pain, the manner in which that simple fact is turned, in M. de Besenval's Memoirs. He is right in saying that M. Campan led him through the upper corridors of the château, and introduced him into an apartment unknown to him; but the air of romance given to the interview is equally culpable and ridiculous.<sup>2</sup> M. de Besenval says that he found himself, without knowing how he came there, in an apartment "unadorned, but very conveniently furnished," of the existence of which he was till then utterly ignorant. He was astonished, he adds, "not that the Queen should have so many facilities, but that she should have ventured to procure them." Ten printed sheets of the woman Lamotte's impure libels contain nothing so injurious to the character of Marie Antoinette as these lines, written by a man whom she honoured by kindness thus undeserved.

<sup>1</sup> [Marie Thérèse Rodet, Madame Geoffrin (1699-1777), married, at the age of fourteen, M. Geoffrin, a rich glass-manufacturer. At his death, in 1749, she became mistress of his wealth, and in the same year "inherited" the *salon* of Madame de Tencin. She entertained the Philosophers, the contributors to the *Encyclopédie*, and liberally encouraged learning and the fine arts. Her *salon* became famous throughout Europe.]

<sup>2</sup> See the Memoirs of Baron de Besenval, vol. i. *Note by the Editor.*

## DE BESENVAL'S CONDUCT RESENTED

He could not possibly have had any opportunity of knowing the existence of these apartments, which consisted of a very small ante-chamber, a bed-chamber, and a closet. Ever since the Queen had occupied her own apartment, this had been appropriated to her Majesty's lady of honour in cases of confinement or sickness, and was actually in such use when the Queen was confined. It was so important that it should not be known the Queen had spoken to the baron before the duel, that she had determined to go through her inner room into this little apartment, to which M. Campan was to conduct him. When men write upon times still in remembrance, they should be scrupulously exact, and not indulge in any exaggerations or constructions of their own.

The Baron de Besenval, in his Memoirs, appears mightily surprised at the Queen's sudden coolness, and injuriously refers it to the fickleness of her disposition. I can explain the reason for the change, by repeating what her Majesty said to me at the time; and I will not alter one of her expressions. Speaking of the strange presumption of men, and the reserve with which women ought always to treat them, the Queen added, that age did not deprive them of the hope of pleasing, if they retained any agreeable qualities; that she had treated the Baron de Besenval as a brave Swiss, agreeable, polished, and witty, whose grey hairs had induced her to look upon him as a man whom she might see without fear of censure; but that she had been much deceived. Her Majesty,

## THE CHEVALIER D'EON

after having enjoined me to the strictest secrecy upon what she was about to impart, informed me, that finding herself alone with the baron, he began to address her with so much gallantry that she was thrown into the utmost astonishment, and that he was mad enough to fall upon his knees, and make her a declaration in form. The Queen added, that she said to him, "Rise, sir: the King shall not be informed of an offence which would disgrace you for ever;" that the baron grew pale, and stammered an apology; that she left her closet without saying another word, and that since that time she hardly ever spoke to him. The Queen said to me on this occasion, "It is delightful to have friends; but in a situation like mine, it is sometimes difficult to adopt the friends of our friends."

The baron, like a bold courtier, knew how to digest both the shame attendant on a step so blamable, and the resentment which had, of course, succeeded. He did not lose the honourable distinction of being on the list of persons received in the society of Trianon.

In the beginning of the year 1779, Chevalier d'Eon obtained permission to return to France, on condition that he should appear there in no other dress than that of a female. The Comte de Vergennes entreated my father, M. Genet, Chief Clerk of Foreign Affairs, who had long known the Chevalier d'Eon, to receive that whimsical personage at his house, to guide and restrain, if possible, his ardent disposition. The Queen, on learning of his arrival at Versailles, sent a foot-

## THE CHEVALIER D'EON

man to desire my father to bring him into her presence; my father thought it his duty first to inform the minister of her Majesty's wish. The Comte de Vergennes expressed himself pleased with my father's prudence, and desired him to accompany him to the Queen. The minister had a few minutes' audience; her Majesty came out of her closet with him, and finding my father in the room beyond it, condescended to express to him the regret she felt at having troubled him to no purpose, and added, smiling, that a few words which M. de Vergennes had just said to her had for ever cured her of her curiosity. The late discovery and confirmation in London, respecting the true sex of this pretended woman, gives room for belief that the few words uttered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Queen contained merely a solution of the enigma. It is known that while the Chevalier d'Eon was Minister Plenipotentiary in London, he outrageously attacked the honour of the Comte de Guerchy; and the court of France, not permitting him to make his appearance again in his own country in any other dress than that of a woman, in some measure repaired his insulting conduct towards a family of consideration.

The Chevalier d'Eon had been useful in Russia to the private espionage of Louis XV. While still very young, he had found means to introduce himself at the court of the Empress Elizabeth, and had served that sovereign in the capacity of reader. Resuming afterwards his military dress, he served with honour,



## THE CHEVALIER D'EON

and was wounded. Appointed Chief Secretary of Legation, and afterwards Minister Plenipotentiary at London, he offended Comte de Guerchy, the ambassador, by the most unpardonable insults. They were of such a nature, that the official order for the chevalier's return to France was actually delivered to the King's council; but Louis XV delayed the departure of the courier who was to be the bearer of it, and sent off another courier privately, who gave the Chevalier d'Eon a letter in his own writing, in which he said, "I know that you have served me as effectually in the dress of a woman as in that which you now wear. Resume it instantly; withdraw into the city; I warn you that the King yesterday signed an order for your return to France; you are not safe in your hotel, and you would here find too powerful enemies." I heard the Chevalier d'Eon repeat the contents of this letter, in which Louis XV thus separated his personal existence from that of the King of France, several times at my father's. The Chevalier, or rather the *Chevalière* d'Eon had preserved all the King's letters. Messieurs de Maurepas and de Vergennes wished to get these letters out of his hands, as they were afraid he would print them. This eccentric being had long solicited his return to France; but it was necessary to find a way of sparing the family he had offended the kind of insult they would see in his return: he was therefore made to resume the costume of that sex to which in France everything is pardoned. The desire to see his native land once more, undoubtedly determined him

## THE LONG-DESIRED EVENT

to submit to the condition, but he balanced it by contrasting the long train of his gown and his three deep ruffles with the attitude and conversation of a grenadier, which, however, made him very disagreeable company.

At last the event so long desired by the Queen, and by all those who wished her well, took place. Her Majesty became pregnant: the King was in ecstasies on the occasion. Never was there a more united or happier couple. The disposition of Louis XVI was entirely altered, and was become prepossessing and conciliatory; he had taken the yoke of love upon him, and the Queen was well compensated for the uneasiness which the King's indifference, during the early part of their union, had caused her.

The summer of 1778 was extremely hot. July and August passed; but the air was not cooled by a single shower. The Queen, inconvenienced by her pregnancy, spent whole days in close rooms, and could not sleep until she had breathed the fresh night air, which she did walking with the princesses and her brothers upon the terrace under her apartments. These promenades at first gave rise to no remarks; but it occurred to some of the party to enjoy the music of wind-instruments during these fine summer nights. The musicians belonging to the chapel were ordered to perform pieces suited to instruments of that description, upon steps constructed in the middle of the garden. The Queen, seated on one of the terrace benches, enjoyed the effect of this music, surrounded

## MIDNIGHT GARDEN PARTIES

by the whole of the royal family with the exception of the King, who joined them but twice, disliking to break in upon his hour of going to bed. Nothing could be more innocent than these parties; yet Paris, France, nay, all Europe, were soon canvassing them in a manner most disadvantageous to the reputation of Marie Antoinette. It is true that all the inhabitants of Versailles chose to enjoy these serenades, and that there was a crowd near the spot from eleven at night until two or three in the morning. The windows of the ground floor occupied by Monsieur and Madame were kept open, and the terrace was perfectly well lighted by the numerous wax candles burning in the two apartments. Lamps were likewise placed in the garden, and the lights of the orchestra illuminated the rest of the place.

I do not know whether a few inconsiderate females might not have ventured farther, and wandered to the bottom of the park: it may have been so; but the Queen, Madame, and the Comtesse d'Artois were always arm-in-arm, and never left the terrace. The princesses were not remarkable when seated on the benches, being dressed in cambric muslin gowns, with large straw hats and muslin veils, a costume universally adopted by females at that time; but when standing up their different figures always distinguished them; and the persons present stood on one side to let them pass. It is true that when they seated themselves upon the benches, private individuals would sometimes, to their great amusement, come

## INDISCREET FAMILIARITY

and sit down by their side. A young clerk in the War Department, lively and of good address, either not knowing the Queen, or pretending not to know her, spoke to her. The beauty of the night, and the delightful effect of the music, formed the subject of the conversation. The Queen, fancying she was not recognised, amused herself by keeping up the incognito, and they talked of several private families of Versailles who were perfectly well known to the Queen, as they all consisted of persons belonging to the King's household, or her own. After thus passing a few minutes, the Queen and princesses rose to walk, and on leaving the bench, curtsied to the clerk. The young man knowing, or having subsequently discovered, that he had been conversing with the Queen, boasted of it in his office. On this being made known, he was desired to hold his tongue; and so little attention did he excite, that the Revolution found him still a mere clerk as before. Another evening one of Monsieur's body-guard, in the same manner, came and seated himself near the princesses, and knowing them, left the place where he was sitting, and came in front of the Queen, to tell her that he was very fortunate in being able to seize an opportunity of imploring the kindness of his sovereign: that he was soliciting at court—at the word soliciting, the Queen and princesses rose hastily and withdrew into Madame's apartment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Soulavie has most criminally perverted these two facts. *Note by Madame Campan.*





*Palace of Versailles*



## CONSEQUENCES OF IMPRUDENCE

I was at the Queen's residence that very day. She talked of this little occurrence all the time of her *coucher*; though she only complained that one of Monsieur's Guards should have the effrontery to speak to her. Her Majesty added that he ought to have respected her being incognito; and that that was not the place where he should have ventured to make a request. Madame had recognised him, and talked of making a complaint to his captain; the Queen opposed it, attributing his error to his ignorance and provincial origin.

The most scandalous tales were made up and inserted in the libels of the day, respecting these two insignificant occurrences which I have related with scrupulous exactness. Nothing could be more false than those calumnious reports. It must be confessed, however, that such meetings were liable to serious ill consequences. I ventured to say as much to the Queen, and informed her that one evening when her Majesty had beckoned to me to go and speak to her on the bench on which she was sitting, I thought I recognised two women deeply veiled, who were seated in profound silence by her side; that those women were no other than the Comtesse du Barry and her sister-in-law; and that my suspicions were confirmed when, at a few paces from the seat, and nearer to her Majesty, I met a tall footman belonging to Madame du Barry, and whom I had seen in her service all the time she resided at court.

My advice was useless. Misled by the pleasure she

## THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE CONCERT

found in these promenades, and lulled into security by the consciousness of blameless conduct, the Queen would not see the lamentable results by which they must necessarily be followed. This was very unfortunate; for, besides the mortifications they brought upon her, it is highly probable they prompted the idea of the vile romance which gave rise to the Cardinal de Rohan's fatal error.

Having enjoyed these evening promenades about a month, the Queen ordered a private concert within the colonnade which contains the group of Pluto and Proserpine. Sentinels were placed at all the entrances into the grove, and ordered to admit within the colonnade only such persons as should produce tickets signed by my father-in-law. A fine concert was performed there by the musicians of the chapel and the female musicians belonging to the Queen's chamber. The Queen went with Mesdames de Polignac, de Chalon, and d'Andlau, and Messieurs de Polignac, de Coigny, de Besenval, and de Vaudreuil; there were also a few equerries present. Her Majesty gave me permission to attend the concert with some of my female relations. There was no music upon the terrace. The crowd of inquisitive people whom the sentinels kept at a distance from the enclosure of the colonnade, went away highly discontented; and the most disgusting calumnies were circulated respecting this private concert.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This anecdote is in the same manner detestably perverted in Soulavie's infamous collection; yet his six volumes are, unfortunately, admitted into libraries, and particularly into the libraries of foreigners. *Note by Madame Campan.*



## OFFENSIVE VERSES

Many people wished to enjoy it, and it really was very delightful. The small number of the persons admitted no doubt occasioned jealousy, and gave rise to offensive comments, which were caught up by the public with avidity. It is very essential to know how far the proceedings of the great should be matters of calculation. I do not pretend here to apologise for the kind of amusement with which the Queen indulged herself during this and the following summer; the consequences were so lamentable that the error was no doubt very great. The result will prove it: I shall not withhold that result, but what I have said respecting the character of these promenades may be relied on as true.

When the season for evening walks was at an end, odious couplets were spread about Paris: the Queen was treated in them in the most insulting manner; her pregnancy had ranked among her enemies persons attached to the only prince who, for several years, had appeared likely to give heirs to the crown. People ventured upon the most inconsiderate language; and those improper conversations took place in societies wherein the imminent danger of violating, to so criminal an extent, both truth and the respect due to sovereigns ought to have been better understood. A few days before the Queen's confinement, a whole volume of manuscript songs concerning her and all the ladies about her, any way remarkable for rank or station, was thrown in at the *Œil de Bœuf*. This manuscript was immediately put into the hands of the

## DE MAUREPAS'S CRUEL ANSWER

King, who was highly incensed at it, and said that he had himself been at those promenades; that he had seen nothing connected with them but what was perfectly harmless; that such songs would disturb the harmony of twenty families of the court and city; that it was a capital crime to have made any against the Queen herself, and that he would have the author of the infamous libels sought out, discovered, and punished. A fortnight afterwards it was known publicly that the verses were by M. Champcenetz de Riquebourg,<sup>1</sup> who was not even molested.

I was assured at the time that the King spoke to M. de Maurepas before two of his most confidential servants, respecting the risk which he saw the Queen ran from these night walks upon the terrace of Versailles, which the public censured thus openly, the old minister had the cruelty to answer the King, that she should be suffered to go on; that she possessed talent; that her friends were very ambitious and longed to see her take part in public affairs; and that to let her acquire the reputation of levity would do no harm.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Monsieur Champcenetz de Riquebourg was known as the author of a great many songs, some of which are very well written. Lively and satirical by nature, he did not lose either his cheerfulness or his carelessness before the revolutionary tribunal; where, after hearing his own sentence of condemnation read, he asked his judges if he might not be allowed to find a substitute. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> This specimen of artifice, so characteristic of an old politician, of a minister who sacrificed even the honour of his sovereign to the preservation of his place, agrees well with the portrait of the Comte de Maurepas drawn by Marmontel. We quote those passages of it which bear most upon his conduct on the occasion mentioned by Madame Campan:

“Watchful attention to preserve his ascendancy over the King’s mind, and his predominance in the council, rendered him jealous even of the objects of his own choice; this restlessness was the only powerful emotion of his

## BIRTH OF MADAME ROYALE

M. de Vergennes was as hostile to the Queen's influence as M. de Maurepas. It may, therefore, be fairly presumed, since the Prime Minister durst point out to his King an advantage to be gained by the Queen degrading herself, that he and M. de Vergennes employed all those means within the reach of powerful ministers, and availed themselves of the slightest errors of that unfortunate princess, in order to ruin her in the opinion of the public.

The Queen's pregnancy advanced: *Te Deums* were sung and prayers offered up in all the cathedrals. At length, on the 11th of December, 1778, the Queen felt her pains come on. The royal family, princes of the blood, and great officers of state passed the night in the rooms adjoining the Queen's bed-chamber. Madame, the King's daughter, came into the world before midday on the 19th of December. The etiquette of allowing all persons indiscriminately to enter at the moment of the delivery of a Queen was observed

mind. Beyond this, he had no energy, no activity of courage, either for good or for evil; weakness without kindness, maliciousness without rancour, resentment without anger, indifference for the future, which he was not to live to see, possibly a sincere anxiety for the public welfare, when he could promote it without any danger to himself, but chilled the moment it involved either his credit or his quiet — such, to the last, were the characteristics of the old statesman who served the young King as his guide and counsellor."

The former part of this portrait, remarkable as well for its faithful representation of the original as for the skill of the painter, will be found among the Illustrations (Note XV, p. 301). We will only add to this note, that the judgment formed by Madame Campan upon the culpable conduct of the Comte de Maurepas is confirmed by a writer with whom, in other respects, she is very seldom in accordance.

"It is known," says Soulavie, "that in 1774, 1775, and 1776, M. de Maurepas stirred up private quarrels between Louis XVI and his wife, on pretence of the Queen's inconsiderate conduct. M. de Maurepas was fond of interfering in family disputes between man and wife. The go-betweens whom he made use of raised the strongest prejudices against the Queen." *Note by the Editors.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH

so literally, that at the instant when the accoucheur, Vermond, said aloud, “*La reine va s’accoucher,*” the torrents of inquisitive persons who poured into the chamber were so great and tumultuous, that the rush was near destroying the Queen. During the night the King had taken the precaution to have the enormous tapestry screens which surrounded her Majesty’s bed secured with cords: had it not been for this foresight, they certainly would have been thrown down upon her. It was impossible to move about the chamber, which was filled with so motley a crowd that anyone might have fancied himself in some place of public amusement. Two Savoyards got upon the furniture to get a better sight of the Queen, who was placed opposite the fireplace, upon a bed prepared for the moment of delivery. The noise, and the sex of the infant, which the Queen was made acquainted with by a sign previously agreed on, as it is said, with the *Princesse de Lamballe*, or some error of the accoucheur, brought on symptoms which threatened the most fatal consequences; the accoucheur exclaimed, “Give her air—warm water—she must be bled in the foot!” The windows were caulked up; the King opened them with a strength which his affection for the Queen gave him at the moment. They were of great height, and pasted over with strips of paper all round. The basin of hot water not being brought quickly enough, the accoucheur desired the chief surgeon to use his lancet without waiting for it. He did so; the blood streamed out freely, and the Queen opened her



## A DANGEROUS COLLAPSE

eyes. The joy which now succeeded to the most dreadful apprehensions could hardly be contained. The Princesse de Lamballe was carried through the crowd in a state of insensibility. The *valets de chambre* and pages dragged such inconsiderate persons as would not leave the room out by the collar. This cruel etiquette was abolished ever afterwards. The princes of the family, the princes of the blood, the Chancellor, and the ministers are surely sufficient to attest the legitimacy of an hereditary prince. The Queen was snatched from the very jaws of death: she was not conscious of having been bled, and on being replaced in bed, asked why she had a linen bandage upon her foot.

The delight which succeeded the moment of fear was equally lively and sincere. We were all embracing each other, and shedding tears of joy. The Count d'Esterhazy<sup>1</sup> and the Prince de Poix, to whom I was the first to announce that the Queen had spoken, and was restored to life, inundated me with their tears, and embraced me in the midst of a whole room-full of the nobility. When recalling those bursts of happiness, those transports of delight, that moment when Heaven gave us back again a princess beloved by all about her, how often have I reflected upon that impenetrable and wholesome obscurity by which all knowledge of the future is concealed from us. What

<sup>1</sup> [Nicholas Joseph, Prince d'Esterhazy de Galantha (1714-1790), of a noble Hungarian family, was the representative in Paris of the King of Bohemia. He was a patron of literature and the arts, especially music. In 1783 the dignity of Prince was extended to all his descendants.]

## REFLECTIONS

should we not have felt, if in the midst of our joyful delirium a heavenly voice, unfolding the secret decree of fate, had cried to us, "Bless not that human art which calls her back to life; weep rather for her return to a world fatal and cruel to the object of your affections. Ah! let her leave it honoured, beloved, regretted. You can now weep over her grave, you can now cover it with flowers; the day will come when all the furies of the earth, after having pierced her heart with a thousand envenomed darts, after having engraved upon her noble and enchanting features the premature marks of age, will deliver her over to an execution more cruel than that inflicted upon criminals, will deprive her body of burial, and will precipitate you into the same gulf with herself, if you suffer the slightest demonstration of compassion at so dreadful a spectacle to escape you."

## CHAPTER IX

AT length the Queen was restored to our fondest wishes. During the moment of alarm, regret at not possessing an heir to the throne was not even thought of. The King himself was wholly occupied with the care of preserving an adored wife. The young princess was presented to the Queen. She pressed her to her truly maternal heart: "Poor little one," said she, "you are not what was wished for, but you are not on that account less dear to me. A son would have been rather the property of the State. You shall be mine; you shall have my undivided care, shall share all my happiness, and console me in all my troubles."

The King despatched a courier to Paris, and wrote letters himself to Vienna, by the Queen's bedside; part of the rejoicings ordered took place in the capital, and the age of the King and Queen affording ground for a presumption that they would have a numerous progeny, hope was again turned towards a new pregnancy.<sup>1</sup>

A great number of attendants watched near the Queen during the first nights of her confinement.

<sup>1</sup> The Queen's propitious delivery was celebrated throughout France. The birth of Madame inspired more than one poet. The following madrigal, by Imbert, was much esteemed:

*"A dauphin we asked of our Queen;  
A princess announces him near:  
Since one of the graces is seen,  
Young Cupid will quickly appear."*

*Note by the Editor.*

## PUBLIC REJOICINGS

This made her uneasy; she knew how to feel for others, and ordered large arm-chairs for her women, the backs of which were capable of being let down by springs, and which served perfectly well instead of beds.

M. de Lassone, the chief physician, the chief surgeon, the chief apothecary, the principal officers of the buttery, &c., were likewise nine nights without going to bed. The royal children were in like manner watched for a long time, and some one of the nurses remained nightly, up and dressed, during the first three years from their birth.

The Queen made her entry into Paris for the churching. One hundred maidens were portioned and married at Notre Dame. There were only a few popular acclamations, but her Majesty was perfectly well received at the opera.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The acts of benevolence performed by the officers of the city did not prevent them from amusing the people with the usual noisy fêtes. There were illuminations, *feux de joie*, fire-works, fountains of wine, and distributions of bread and sausages. All the theatres of Paris were open, gratis—that was a new treat to the public. Every theatre was full before noon, and the performance began at two o'clock. The French comedians performed *Zaire* and the little piece called *Le Florentin*. In spite of all the precautions taken to preserve the King's box for the charcoal venders, who were accustomed to occupy it on similar occasions, as the *poissardes* or market women did that of the Queen, their places were occupied when they arrived. They were informed of this, and thought it very strange. These two chief classes of the lower orders were seen disputing upon etiquette, with almost as much pertinacity as noblemen or sovereign courts. They demanded to know why the boxes, appropriated to them by custom, had been suffered to be occupied. It was necessary to call the officer for the week, and the histrionic senate being assembled in consultation, the registers were inspected, and the legitimacy of the claim was acknowledged. An offer was then made to the charcoal venders to go upon the stage, and they all sat there on the King's side, upon benches prepared for them. The *poissardes* followed, and placed themselves on the opposite side. Such grave questions of precedence well deserve to be particularised in memoirs of the times. Since the Revolution, neither the charcoal



## THE QUEEN'S WEDDING-RING

A few days after the Queen's recovery from her confinement, the curé of the Madeleine de la-Cité, at Paris, wrote to M. Campan, and requested a private interview with him; it was to desire he would deliver into the hands of the Queen a little box containing her wedding-ring, with this note written by the curé: "I have received under the seal of confession the ring which I send to your Majesty, with an avowal that it was stolen from you in 1771, in order to be used in sorceries to prevent your having any children." On seeing her ring again the Queen said that she had, in fact, lost it about seven years before, while washing her hands; and that she had made it a rule with herself to use no endeavour to discover the superstitious woman who had done her the injury.

The Queen's attachment for the Comtesse Jules increased every day; she went frequently to her house at Paris, and even took up her own abode at the Château de la Muette, to be more at hand to visit her during her confinement.<sup>1</sup> She married Mademoi-

venders nor the *poissardes* are distinguished in the gratis performances; all ranks are confounded together. *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> The following extract describes the Queen's feelings towards her friend:

"The Duchesse de Polignac," says Montjoie, in the *Life of Marie Antoinette*, "actually sank under the fatigues of the kind of life which her devotion to the Queen had imposed upon her, and which, however, was so little to her taste. Her health declined in an alarming degree: the physicians ordered her the Bath waters. As it was the established custom of the court that the governess of the children of France should never be absent from them, the duchess saw herself by this order of the physicians placed in the alternative of either continuing an office, the duty of which her bad health prevented her from fulfilling, or of resigning. She tendered her resignation to the Queen, who, having listened to her in silence, with her eyes bathed in tears, replied in the following terms:

"You ought not to part from me, nor can you do it — your heart could not suffer it. In the rank I fill, it is difficult to meet with a friend; and yet it is so useful — so comfortable — to confide in an estimable person! You do not judge

## A DISAPPOINTMENT

selle de Polignac, who was scarcely thirteen years of age, to M. de Gramont, who, on account of this marriage, was made Duc de Guiche and captain of the King's Guards, in reversion after the Duc de Ville-roi. The Duchesse de Curac, Madame Victoire's *dame d'honneur*, had been promised the place for the Duc de Lorges, her son; and all this much increased the number of discontented families at court.

The name of favourite was too openly given to the Comtesse Jules by her friends: the lot of the favourite of a queen is not, in France, a happy one; the favourites of kings are treated, out of gallantry, with much greater indulgence.

A short time after the birth of Madame, the Queen became pregnant; she had spoken of it only to the King, to her physician, and to a few persons honoured with her intimate confidence, when, having exerted her strength in pulling up one of the glasses of her carriage, she felt that she had hurt herself, and eight days afterwards she miscarried. The King spent the whole morning at her bedside, consoling her, and manifesting the tenderest concern for her. The Queen wept exceedingly; the King took her affectionately in his arms, and mingled his tears with hers. The Queen repeated several times that she was glad she

of me as the common herd do; you know that the splendour which surrounds me adds nothing to happiness; you are not ignorant that my mind, full of bitterness and troubles which I must conceal, feels the necessity for a heart that understands them. Ought I not then to thank Heaven for having given me a friend like you — faithful, feeling, attached to me for my own sake, and not for the sake of my rank? The benefit is inestimable; in the name of God, do not deprive me of it!" " *Note by the Editor.*

## DEATH OF MARIA THERESA

had not mentioned her pregnancy in her family; that people would not have failed to attribute her misfortune to some imprudence of her own, while in fact it had been occasioned by a very simple accident. The King enjoined silence among the small number of persons who were informed of this unfortunate occurrence; and it remained generally unknown. It was some time before the Queen recovered her health; the King was much interested in it, and waited impatiently for the moment when new hopes might be indulged. These particulars, which are quite true, furnish the most accurate idea of the manner in which this august couple lived together.

The Empress Maria Theresa did not enjoy the happiness of seeing her daughter give an heir to the crown of France. That illustrious princess terminated her mortal career about the close of 1780, after having proved by her example that, as in the instance of Queen Blanche, the talents of a sovereign might be blended with the virtues of a pious princess. The King was deeply affected at the death of the Empress; and on the arrival of the courier from Vienna, said that he could not bring himself to afflict the Queen by informing her of an event which grieved even him so much. His Majesty thought the Abbé de Vermond, who had possessed the confidence of Maria Theresa during his stay at Vienna, the most proper person to discharge this painful duty towards the Queen. He sent his first *valet de chambre*, M. de Chamilly, to him on the evening of the day he received the de-



## MARIE ANTOINETTE'S GRIEF

spatches from Vienna, and ordered him to come the next day to the Queen before her breakfast hour, to acquit himself discreetly of the afflicting commission with which he was charged, and to let his Majesty know the moment of his entering the Queen's chamber. It was the King's intention to be there precisely a quarter of an hour after him, and he was punctual to his time. He was announced; the abbé came out; and his Majesty said to him, as he drew up at the door to let him pass, "I thank you, Monsieur l'Abbé, for the service you have just done me." This was the only time during nineteen years that the King spoke to him.

So great was the Queen's grief, that it was right to anticipate and provide against its effects. Within an hour after learning the event she put on temporary mourning, while waiting until her court mourning should be ready; she kept herself shut up in her closet for several days, went out only to mass, saw none but the royal family, and received none but the Princesse de Lamballe and the Duchesse de Polignac. She never ceased talking of the courage, the misfortunes, the abilities, and pious virtues of her mother. The feelings of Christian meekness never forsook that princess; her shroud and the dress in which she was to be buried, made entirely by her own hands, were found ready prepared in one of her rooms. The Queen found no greater comfort in her affliction than talking of her beloved mother; she was thoroughly versed in the various events which dis-



## REMINISCENCES OF MARIA THERESA

tinguished the Empress's reign, and in all the qualities which rendered her dear to her family, her intimates, and her people. She often testified the regret she felt in thinking that the numerous duties of her august mother had prevented her watching in person over the education of her daughters; and modestly said, that she herself should have been more worthy if she had had the good fortune to receive lessons directly from a sovereign so enlightened, and so deserving of admiration.

These pages were penned long after I was witness to, and sometimes depository of, things which would have been well worth recording. I regret the loss of several anecdotes of the court of Maria Theresa of which I have only confused ideas remaining; but I cannot avoid relating one in particular, which struck me forcibly, and which still adheres to my memory. The Queen told me one day, that her mother was left a widow at an age when her beauty was yet striking: that she was secretly informed of a scheme projected by her three principal ministers to make themselves agreeable to her; of a compact made between them, that the losers should not suffer themselves to be infected with any feeling of jealousy towards him who should be fortunate enough to gain his sovereign's heart; and that they had sworn that the successful one should be always the friend and support of the other two. The Empress, being well assured of this fact, one day, after the breaking up of the council over which she had presided, turned the conversation upon

## BIRTH OF THE DAUPHIN

the subject of women, female sovereigns, and the duties of their sex and rank; and then applying her general reflections to herself in particular, she told them she hoped to guard herself all her life against weaknesses of the heart; but that if ever an irresistible feeling should make her alter her resolution, it should be only in favour of a man proof against ambition, not engaged in state affairs, accustomed and attached only to a private life and its calm enjoyments—in a word, if her heart should betray her so far as to lead her to love a man invested with any important office, from the moment he should discover her sentiments, he should be contented to resign his place and his influence with the public. This was sufficient: the three ministers, more ambitious than amorous, gave up their projects for ever.

The Queen's second pregnancy was publicly known in the month of April; her health was excellent down to the moment of her confinement. At length, on the 22d of October, 1781, she gave birth to a dauphin. So deep a silence prevailed in the room at the moment the child first saw the light, that the Queen thought she had only produced a daughter; but after the Keeper of the Seals had declared the sex of the infant, the King went up to the Queen's bed, and said to her, "Madame, you have fulfilled my wishes and those of France; you are the mother of a dauphin." The King's joy was boundless; tears streamed from his eyes; he gave his hand to everyone present without distinction; and his happiness raised him quite

## JOY OVER THE DAUPHIN'S BIRTH

above his habitual disposition. Cheerful and affable to all, he was incessantly taking occasion to introduce the words, "my son," or "the dauphin." As soon as the Queen was in bed, she would see the long-looked-for infant. The *Princesse de Guéménée* brought it to her. The Queen told her there was no necessity for commending the precious deposit to her; but, that in order to enable her to attend to him more freely, she would herself share with her the cares which the education of her daughter required. When the dauphin was settled in his apartment, he received the customary homages and visits. The *Duc d'Angoulême* meeting his father at the entrance of the dauphin's apartment, said to him, "Oh, papa, how little my cousin is!" "The day will come when you will think him great enough, my dear," answered the prince, almost involuntarily.

The birth of the dauphin appeared to crown the hopes of all classes with universal joy; the people, the nobility, all seemed in this respect to belong to one family. Men stopped one another in the streets, spoke without being acquainted, and those who were acquainted embraced each other. Alas! personal interest is much more frequently the source of transports such as these than any sincere attachment to those who seem to occasion them. In the birth of a legitimate heir to the sovereign power every man beholds a pledge of prosperity and tranquillity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the evening of the very day on which the dauphin was born, *Madame Billoni*, an actress of the Italian theatre, who represented a fairy in the piece

## PUBLIC REJOICINGS

The rejoicings were equally splendid and ingenious. The artificers and tradesmen of Paris spent considerable sums in order to go to Versailles in a body, with their various insignia. Their new and elegant dresses formed a most agreeable sight. Almost every troop had music with it. When they arrived at the court of the palace, they there ranged themselves ingeniously, and presented a most interesting, moving picture. Chimney-sweepers, quite as well dressed as those that appear upon the stage, carried an ornamented chimney, at the top of which was perched one of the smallest of their fraternity. The chairman carried a sedan highly gilt, in which were to be seen a handsome nurse and a little dauphin. The butchers made their appearance graced with good fat beef. Cooks, masons, blacksmiths, all trades were on the alert. The smiths hammered away upon an anvil, the shoemakers finished off a little pair of boots for the

then performing, sang some pretty couplets by Imbert, of which the following is the sense :

*"On fairy pinions I advance,  
Great tidings to impart;  
An infant prince is born to France,  
And cheers each loyal heart.*

*Long may this cherish'd dauphin wait,  
Ere he the throne ascend;  
And long with glory rule the state,  
Before his reign shall end."*

M. MÉRARD de Saint Just made a quatrain on the same subject, to the following effect :

*"This infant prince our hopes are centr'd in  
Will, doubtless, make us happy, rich, and free;  
And since with somebody he must begin,  
My fervent pray'r is—that it may be me !"*

*Note by the Editor.*



## PUBLIC REJOICINGS

dauphin, and the tailors a little suit of the uniform of his regiment. The King remained a long time upon a balcony to enjoy the sight. The whole court was delighted with it. So general was the enthusiasm, that ( the police not having carefully examined the procession ) the grave-diggers had the impudence to send their deputation also, with the emblematic devices of their ill-omened occupation. They were met by the Princesse Sophie, the King's aunt, who was thrilled with horror at the sight, and entreated the King to have the audacious fellows driven out of the procession which was then drawing up on the terrace.<sup>1</sup>

The market women came to congratulate the Queen, and were received with the ceremonies due to that body of dealers. They appeared to the number of fifty, dressed in black silk gowns, the old established full dress of their order; and they almost all wore diamonds. The Princesse de Chimay went to the door of the Queen's bedroom to receive three of these ladies, who were led up to the Queen's bed. One of them addressed her Majesty in a speech written by M. de La Harpe. It was set down on the inside of a fan, to which the speaker repeatedly referred, but without any embarrassment. She was handsome, and had a remarkably fine voice. The Queen was affected by the address, and answered it with great affability, making a distinction between these women

<sup>1</sup> [It must be remembered that all the trades and callings in a town of any importance were organised in guilds—a circumstance which facilitated the despatch of deputations.]

## PUBLIC REJOICINGS

and the *poissardes*, who always left a disagreeable impression on her mind.<sup>1</sup> The King ordered a substantial repast for all these women. One of his Majesty's *maîtres d'hôtel*,<sup>2</sup> wearing his hat, sat as president, and did the honours of the table. The public were admitted, and numbers of people had the curiosity to go.

The *poissardes'* songs were numerous, and some of them tolerably good. The King and Queen were much pleased with the following one, and sang it several times during the Queen's confinement:

“*Ne craignez pas, cher papa,  
D’voir augmenter vot’ famille  
Le bon Dieu z’y pourvoira:  
Fait s-en tant que Versaille en fourmille  
Y eût-il cent Bourbons cheu nous,  
Y a du pain, du laurier pour tous.*”

The body-guards obtained the King's permission to give the Queen a dress ball in the great room of the

<sup>1</sup> The *poissardes* spoke three addresses—one to the King, one to the Queen, and one to the dauphin. Possibly the reader may wish to see them. To the King they said:

“Sire, if a son was due from heaven to a king who looks upon his people as his family, our prayers and our wishes have long interceded for one. At length they are heard. We are now certain that our children will be as happy as ourselves; for this child will be like you. You will teach him, Sire, to be as just and as good as yourself. We will take upon ourselves to teach our children how to love and respect their king.” To the Queen they said, among other things, “We have so long loved you, Madame, without daring to say so to yourself, that all our respect is necessary to prevent our misusing the permission now given us to express it.” And to the dauphin they said, “You do not understand the wishes we express around your cradle—they will some day be explained to you. They are all reducible to this, namely, that in you we may behold the image of those who gave you life.” (*Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. i.) *Note by the Editors.*

<sup>2</sup> Proofs of nobility, or at least of being noble in the third degree, were required for the office of *maître d'hôtel*. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## CHOICE OF A GOVERNESS

opera-house at Versailles. Her Majesty opened the ball in a minuet with a private selected by the corps, to whom the King granted the bâton of an exempt. The fête was most splendid. All was joy, happiness, and peace.

The dauphin was a year old when the Prince de Guéménée's bankruptcy compelled the princess his wife, who was governess to the children of France, to resign her situation.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen was at La Muette, where her daughter was undergoing inoculation. She sent for me, and condescended to say she wished to converse with me about a scheme which delighted her, but in the execution of which she foresaw some inconveniences. Her plan was to appoint the Duchesse de Polignac to the office lately held by the Princesse de Guéménée. She saw, with ecstasy, the facility which this appointment would give her to superintend the education of her children, without running any risk of hurting the pride of the governess; and that it would bring

<sup>1</sup> Le Brun deposited all his savings with the Prince de Guéménée, whose bankruptcy ruined him. He revenged himself by the following epigrammatic lines, in which may be seen the bitterness of a satirical poet and the resentment of a creditor:

*"A prince, full of titles — a sharper serene —  
Eased our purses of millions a few;  
See what troops of old men! — what despair in their mien! —  
How humbly for justice they sue!  
A kind rogue of a clerk (for, like master like man),  
Thus seeks to console them as well as he can:  
'Take courage, old gentlemen, dry up your tears,  
For princes of honour and conscience are made,  
If you will but have patience some odd fifty years,  
Without loss or deduction you all will be paid.'"*

*Note by the Editor.*

## DUCHESSE DE POLIGNAC SELECTED

together, in one place, all the objects of her warmest affections, her children and her friend. "The friends of the Duchesse de Polignac," continued the Queen, "will be gratified by the splendour and importance conferred by the employment. As to the duchess, I know her: the place by no means suits her plain and quiet habits, nor the indolence (if I may use the expression) of her disposition. If she yields to my wish, then she will give me the greatest possible proof of her devotion to me." The Queen also spoke of the Princesse de Chimay and the Duchesse de Duras, whom the public pointed out as fit to fill the office of governess; but she thought the Princesse de Chimay's piety too rigid, and as to the Duchesse de Duras, her wit and knowledge quite frightened her.<sup>1</sup> What the Queen dreaded as the consequence of her selection of the Duchesse de Polignac was, principally, the jealousy of the courtiers, who would never fail to make her feel the mortifications inseparable from that elevation. The Queen showed so lively a desire to see the execution of her scheme, that I had no doubt she would soon set at nought the obstacles she discovered; I was not mistaken. A few days afterwards the duchess was invested with the office of governess.

The Queen's object in sending for me to converse about her scheme was, no doubt, to furnish me with

<sup>1</sup> [The Duchesse de Duras, during her husband's embassy at Madrid (1752-55), displayed great activity in rallying the French party. Sir Benjamin Keene, British ambassador, describes her as fatiguing the Queen of Spain by her importunities on behalf of a Franco-Spanish alliance.]



## EXPENSE AT MARLY

the means of explaining the feelings which induced her to prefer a governess disposed by friendship to suffer her to enjoy all the privileges of a mother. Her Majesty knew that I saw a great deal of company.

The Queen frequently dined at the duchess's, after having been present at the King's private dinner. Sixty-one thousand francs were therefore added to the salary of the latter as governess, as a compensation for this increase of expense.

The Queen was tired of the excursions to Marly, and had no great difficulty in setting the King against them. He did not like the expense of them, for everybody was entertained there gratis. Louis XIV had established a kind of parade upon these excursions, differing from that of Versailles, but still more annoying.

Card and supper parties occurred perpetually, and occasioned much expense in dress.

On Sundays and holidays the fountains played, the people were admitted into the gardens, and there was always as great a crowd as at the fête of Saint Cloud.

Every age has its peculiar complexion, and that very decidedly. Marly showed the colour of that of Louis XIV even more than Versailles. Everything in the former place appeared to have been produced by the magic power of a fairy's wand.

The palaces and gardens of that seat of pleasure might be also compared with the scenic decorations of the fifth act of an opera. Not the slightest trace of all this splendour remains: the revolutionary spoilers

## DESCRIPTION OF MARLY

even tore up from the bosom of the earth the pipes which served to supply the fountains. Possibly a brief description of this palace and the usages established there by Louis XIV may be acceptable.

The very extensive garden of Marly rose, by an imperceptible ascent, up to the pavilion of the sun, which was occupied only by the King and his family. The pavilions of the twelve zodiacal signs bounded the two sides of the lawn. They were connected by elegant bowers impervious to the rays of the sun. The pavilions nearest to that of the sun were reserved for the princes of the blood and the ministers, the rest were occupied by persons holding superior offices at court, or by persons invited to stay at Marly. Each pavilion was named after fresco paintings which covered its walls, and which were executed by the most celebrated artists of the age of Louis XIV.<sup>1</sup>

Upon a line with the upper pavilion there was on the left, the chapel; on the right, a pavilion called *La Perspective*, which concealed a long suite of offices containing a hundred lodging-rooms appropriated to the persons belonging to the service of the court, kitchens, and spacious dining-rooms, in which more than thirty tables were splendidly laid out.

During one half of Louis XV's reign the ladies still wore "the Marly court dress," so named by Louis XIV, and which differed but little from that

<sup>1</sup> Her Royal Highness the Duchesse de Berry has, at Rosny, a painting which exactly represents the mansion, pavilions, and gardens of Marly. This resemblance alone is now sufficient to make the picture very valuable. *Note by the Editor.*



*Palace of Martyr*





## *MODE OF LIFE AT MARLY*

devised for Versailles. The French gown, puckered in the back, and great hoops, succeeded this dress, and maintained their ground to the end of the reign of Louis XVI.

The diamonds, feathers, rouge, and embroidered stuffs spangled with gold banished even the slightest traces of rural character from this spot; but the people loved to see the splendour of their sovereign, and a brilliant court glittering in the shades of the woods.

After dinner, and before the hour for cards, the Queen, princesses, and their ladies paraded among the clumps of trees, in little carriages, beneath canopies richly embroidered with gold, rolled forward by the King's livery servants. The trees were planted by Louis XIV, and were of prodigious height, which, however, was surpassed in several of the groups, by fountains of the clearest water; while among others, cascades over white marble, the waters of which, being met by the sunbeams, looked like draperies of silver gauze, formed a contrast to the solemn darkness of the groves.

In the evening nothing more was necessary for any well-dressed man to procure admission to the Queen's card parties, than to be named and presented by some officer of the court to the gentleman usher of the card-room. This room, which was very large and of octagonal shape, rose to the very top of the Italian roof, and terminated in a cupola, furnished with balconies, in which females who had not been

## GAMBLING AT MARLY

presented easily obtained leave to place themselves, and enjoy the sight of the brilliant assemblage.

Though not of the number of persons belonging to the court, gentlemen admitted into this saloon were allowed to request one of the ladies seated with the Queen at lansquenet or faro, to bet upon her cards with such gold or notes as they presented to her.

Rich people and the deep gamesters of Paris did not miss one of the evenings at the Marly saloon, and there were always very considerable sums won and lost.

Louis XVI hated high play, and very often showed displeasure when the loss of large sums was mentioned.<sup>1</sup> The fashion of wearing a black coat without being in mourning had not then been introduced, and the King gave a few raps on the knuckles to certain Chevaliers de Saint Louis dressed in this manner, who came to venture two or three louis in the hope that fortune would favour the handsome duchesses who deigned to place them on their cards.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "In 1790, an officer of the National Guards was walking in the apartments of the Tuileries, when the King, having observed him, asked him if he could play at backgammon. Upon his answering in the affirmative the King sat down with him to play, and won nine francs off him, at a *petit écu*, or half-a-crown a game. The hour for attending the council being come, the King left him, promising him his revenge another time." (*Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. i.) *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> Bachaumont, in his *Memoirs*, which are often satirical and always somewhat questionable, speaks of the singular precautions taken at play at court.

"The bankers at the Queen's table," says he, "in order to prevent the *mistakes* (I soften the harshness of his expression) which daily happen, have obtained permission from her Majesty that before beginning to play, the table shall be bordered by a ribbon entirely round it, and that no other money than that upon the cards beyond the ribbon shall be considered as staked." He adds several other particulars, which denote unaccountable errors, but we have too

## EN POLISSON AT MARLY

Singular contrasts are often seen amidst the grandeur of courts. In order to manage such high play at the Queen's faro table, it was necessary to have a banker provided with large sums of money; and this necessity placed at the table, to which none but the highest-titled persons were admitted in general, not only M. de Chalabre, who was the banker, but also a mere retired captain of foot, who officiated as his second. A low word, appropriate to express the manner in which the court was attended there, was often heard. Gentlemen presented at court, who had not been invited to stay at Marly, came there notwithstanding, as they did to Versailles, and returned again to Paris; under such circumstances it was said such an one had been to Marly only *en polisson*; and nothing appeared to me more odd than to hear an agreeable marquis, in answer to the inquiry of one of his intimates whether he was of the royal party at Marly, say, "No, I am only here *en polisson*:" meaning nothing more than, "I am here on the footing of all those whose nobility is of a later date than 1400." What powerful talents, how many persons of merit, who were unhappily destined too soon to attack the ancient monarchy, were in the class designated by the word blackguard!

The Marly excursions were exceedingly expensive to the King. Besides the superior tables, those of the almoners, equerries, *maîtres d'hôtel*, &c., were all supplied with such a degree of magnificence as to

little faith in their truth to repeat them." (Bachaumont's *Memoirs*, vol. xii.)  
*Note by the Editor.*

## THE QUEEN AT PETIT TRIANON

allow of inviting strangers to them; and almost all the visitors from Paris were boarded at the expense of the court.

The personal frugality of the unfortunate prince who sunk beneath the weight of the national debts, thus enabled the Queen to indulge her predilection for her Petit Trianon; and for five or six years preceding the Revolution, the court very seldom visited Marly.

The King, always attentive to the comfort of his family, gave the princesses, his aunts, the enjoyment of the Château of Bellevue, and afterwards purchased the Princesse de Guéménée's house at the entrance to Paris, for Madame Elizabeth.<sup>1</sup> The Comtesse de Provence bought a small house at Montreuil; Monsieur already had Brunoy; the Comtesse d'Artois built Bagatelle; Versailles became, in the estimation of all the members of the royal family, the least agreeable of residences. They only fancied themselves at home in plainer houses, surrounded by English gardens. The taste for cascades and statues was entirely past.

The Queen occasionally remained a whole month at Petit Trianon, and had adopted all the ways of a country life. She entered the sitting-room without driving the ladies from their pianoforte or embroidery. The gentlemen continued their billiards or backgammon without suffering her presence to interrupt them. There was but little room in the small châ-

<sup>1</sup> Madame Elizabeth enjoyed this house for several years; but the King arranged that she should not sleep there until she was twenty-five years of age. The Revolution broke out before that time. *Note by Madame Campan.*



## DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES

teau of Trianon. Madame Elizabeth accompanied the Queen there, but the ladies of honour and ladies of the bed-chamber had no establishment at Trianon. When invited by the Queen, they came from Versailles to dinner. The King and princes came regularly to sup. A white gown, a gauze kerchief, and a straw hat were the uniform dress of the princesses.<sup>1</sup> The pleasure of examining all the manufactories of the hamlet, seeing the cows milked, and fishing in the lake delighted the Queen; and every year she showed increased aversion to the pompous excursions to Marly.

The Queen at first intended to live at Trianon, free from the trouble and display of all artificial amusements; but she changed her mind, and determined to act plays, as it was then the fashion to do in most country houses. It was agreed that no young man other than the Comte d'Artois should be admitted into the company of performers, and that the audience should consist only of the King, Monsieur, and the princesses, who did not play; but in order to stimulate the actors a little, the first boxes were to be occupied by the readers, the Queen's ladies, their sisters and daughters, making altogether about forty persons.

The Queen laughed heartily at the voice of M. d'Adhémar, formerly a very fine one, but latterly become rather tremulous. His shepherd's dress, in Colin, in

<sup>1</sup> The historian of Marie Antoinette adds further points to this picture, and makes some judicious reflections on the influence of a change of costume upon manners. See the Illustrations (Note XVI, p. 302), the whole of which is by an intelligent observer. *Note by the Editor.*

## DUC DE FRONSAC OFFENDED

“Le Devin du Village,”<sup>1</sup> contrasted very ridiculously with his time of life, and the Queen repeatedly said it would be difficult for malevolence itself to find anything to criticise in the choice of such a lover. The King was highly amused with these plays.

Louis XVI was present at every performance; he was often waited for before they were begun. Caillot, a celebrated actor, who had long quitted the stage, and Dazincourt, both of acknowledged good character, were selected to give lessons, the first in comic opera, which was preferred as easiest, and the second in comedy. The office of hearer of rehearsals, prompter, and stage manager was given to my father-in-law. The Duc de Fronsac,<sup>2</sup> First Gentleman of the Chamber, was much hurt at this appointment. He thought himself called upon to make serious remonstrances upon the subject, and wrote to the Queen, who contented herself with making him the following answer: “You cannot be first gentleman when we are the actors. Besides, I have already intimated to you my determination respecting Trianon. I hold no court there, I live like a private person, and M. Campan shall be always employed to execute orders relative to the private fêtes I choose to give there.” This not putting

<sup>1</sup> [Rousseau's opera, *Le Devin du Village*, was performed at Fontainebleau on October 18, 1752. Later on, La Pompadour took part in it in a private performance. Bonaparte, in his “Discours de Lyon” (1791), declared that if Rousseau had composed only that opera, he would deserve a statue “erected by all who have sensibility.”]

<sup>2</sup> [Duc de Fronsac (1737–1791), only surviving son of the Duc de Richelieu. In 1764 he married Mademoiselle d’Hautefort, and on the death of his father, in 1788, he succeeded him as the fourth Duc de Richelieu.]

## THE QUEEN AS ACTRESS

a stop to the duke's remonstrances, the King was obliged to interfere. The duke continued obstinate, and insisted that his rights as First Gentleman of the Chamber allowed him to decline being represented by any deputy; that he was entitled to manage the private amusements as much as those which were public. It became absolutely necessary to end the argument in a positive manner.

The diminutive Duc de Fronsac never failed, whenever he came to pay his respects to the Queen at her toilet, to turn the conversation upon Trianon, in order to make some ironical remarks on my father-in-law, of whom, from the time of his appointment, he always spoke as "my colleague Campan." The Queen would shrug her shoulders, and say, when he was gone, "It is quite shocking to find so little a man in the son of the Maréchal de Richelieu."

"La Gageure imprévue" was one of the pieces performed at Trianon. The Queen played Gotte; the Comtesse Diana, Madame de Clainville; Madame Elizabeth, the young woman, and the Comte d'Artois one of the male characters. Colette, in "Le Devin du Village," was really very well played by the Queen. They performed also, in the course of the following seasons, "Le Roi et le Fermier," "Rose et Colas," "Le Sorcier," "L'Anglais à Bordeaux," "On ne s'avise jamais de tout," "Le Barbier de Seville," &c.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These performances, in which Marie Antoinette delighted in taking a part, have been repeatedly censured. Montjoie himself, as may be seen in the Historical Illustrations (Note XVII, p. 303), reproaches the Queen almost with severity, and makes observations, which appear to us not to be quite cor-

## ADMISSION TO THE PLAY REFUSED

So long as no strangers were admitted to these performances they were but little censured; but a profusion of praise enhanced the idea which the performers entertained of their talents, and made them look for a larger circle of admirers.

The Queen permitted the officers of the body-guards and the equerries of the King and princes to be present at the play. Private boxes were provided for some of the people belonging to the court; a few more ladies were invited; and claims arose on all sides for the favour of admission.

The Queen refused to admit the officers of the body-guards of the princes, the officers of the King's hundred Swiss Guards, and many other persons who were highly mortified at the refusal.

The company, for a private company, was good enough; and the acting was applauded to the skies; nevertheless, as the audience withdrew, criticisms

rect. "Formerly," says he, "any private gentleman would have been disgraced upon it being known that he had turned actor, even in a family party." We will not decide whether it would have been more disgraceful in a private gentleman to act in a play, or, for instance, like the Comte de Gramont, to back with a detachment of cavalry a game of piquet, in which art had corrected fortune; but we will observe, that in 1701, J. B. Rousseau's *Ceinture Magique* was played by the *princes of the blood* before the Duchess of Burgundy. (*Memoirs for the History of Voltaire*, Amsterdam, 1785.) Voltaire gives still more minute particulars of these performances, in which *private gentlemen* would no doubt have been induced to figure. "There was," says he (vol. xxi, p. 157), "a small theatre erected in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon. The Duchess of Burgundy and the Duke of Orléans, with such persons of the court as were most conspicuous for talent, performed there. The eminent actor Baron instructed them and played with them. The majority of Duché's tragedies were composed for this theatre." We shall add but one word to these positive facts, which is, that the young and lovely Marie Antoinette might well see nothing wrong in an amusement tolerated by Madame de Maintenon in the sour, hypocritical, and bigoted court of the latter years of Louis XIV.

*Note by the Editor.*



## THE ANGLO-AMERICAN WAR

were plainly heard, and a few of the visitors would observe, that the piece was "royally ill played."

While delight at having given an heir to the throne of the Bourbons, and a succession of fêtes and amusements filled up the happy days of Marie Antoinette, the community was solely engrossed in the Anglo-American War. Two kings, or rather their ministers, planted and propagated the love of liberty in the New World: the King of England, by shutting his ears and his heart against the continued and respectful representations of subjects at a distance from their native land, who had become numerous, rich, and powerful, through the resources of the soil they had fertilised; and the King of France, by giving support to a people in rebellion against their ancient sovereign. Many young soldiers belonging to the first families of the country, followed La Fayette's<sup>1</sup> example, and broke through all the illusions of grandeur, and all the charms of luxury, of amusements, and of love, to go and tender their courage and their information to the revolted Americans. Beaumarchais,<sup>2</sup> secretly seconded by Messieurs de Maurepas and de Vergennes, obtained permission to send out to the Amer-

<sup>1</sup> [Marie Jean Paul Roch Yves Gilbert Motier, Marquis de La Fayette (1757-1834), at the age of twenty offered his services to America in the War of Independence. He adopted republican principles, though during the French Revolution he acted with the Feuillants, the friends of Constitutional monarchy. Later, he opposed the claims both of Napoleon and the Bourbons, proclaiming as his ideal the Constitution of the United States.]

<sup>2</sup> [Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-1799), dramatist and politician, married the widow of a court dignitary and obtained his patent of nobility. He is chiefly remembered by his two comedies, *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. His satirical writings helped to bring about the Revolution.]

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

icans supplies of arms and clothing. Franklin<sup>1</sup> appeared at court in the dress of an American farmer. His straight unpowdered hair, his round hat, his brown cloth coat, formed a contrast with the laced and embroidered coats and the powdered and perfumed heads of the courtiers of Versailles. This novelty turned the enthusiastic heads of the French women. Elegant entertainments were given to Doctor Franklin, who to the reputation of a most skilful natural philosopher added the patriotic virtues which had invested him with the noble character of an apostle of liberty. I was present at one of these entertainments, when the most beautiful woman out of three hundred was selected to place a crown of laurels upon the white head of the American philosopher, and two kisses upon his cheeks.<sup>2</sup> Even in the palace of Versailles, Franklin's medallion was sold under the King's eyes, in the exhibition of Sèvres porcelain. The legend of this medallion was:

<sup>1</sup> [Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), American statesman and philosopher, began life as a printer. During the agitation preceding the American War of Independence he took a prominent part in politics, and in 1788 was accredited Minister to France. He assisted in the settlement of the Treaty of Paris, 1783.]

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Franklin spent the earlier part of his life in the labours of the printing house. When the news of his death arrived in Paris, in 1790, a society of printers met in an apartment of the Cordeliers' Convent, to celebrate a funeral festival in honour of the American philosopher. His bust was elevated upon a column in the middle of the room. Upon the head was placed a civic crown: below the bust were compositors' cases, a press, and other emblems of the art which the sage had cultivated. While one printer was pronouncing an eulogium upon Franklin, workmen were printing it, and the speech, composed and pulled off as fast as uttered, was copiously distributed among the spectators brought together by this entertainment. The *Historical Illustrations* (Note XVIII, p. 304) contain some particulars respecting Benjamin Franklin. *Note by the Editor.*

## THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

“*Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.*”

The King never declared his opinion upon an enthusiasm which his correct judgment, no doubt, led him to blame: however, the Comtesse Diana having, to keep up her character as a woman of superior talent, entered with considerable warmth into the idolatry of the American delegate, a jest was played off upon her, which was kept secret enough, and may give us some idea of the private sentiments of Louis XVI. He had a *vase de nuit* made at the Sèvres manufactory, at the bottom of which was the medallion with its fashionable legend, and he sent the utensil to the Comtesse Diana as a New Year's gift. The Queen spoke out more plainly about the part France was taking respecting the independence of the American colonies, and constantly opposed it. Far was she from foreseeing that a revolution at such a distance could excite one in which the day would come when a misguided populace would drag her from her palace to a death equally unjust and cruel. She only saw something ungenerous in the method which France adopted of checking the power of England.

However, as Queen of France, she enjoyed the sight of a whole people rendering homage to the prudence, courage, and good qualities of a young Frenchman; and she shared the enthusiasm inspired by the conduct and military success of the Marquis de La Fayette.<sup>1</sup> The Queen granted him several audi-

<sup>1</sup> The father of the Marquis de La Fayette was killed at the battle of Rosbach. The following September his wife gave birth to a son. At the age of twenty

## THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE

ences on his first return from America, and until the 10th of August, on which day my house was plundered, I had preserved some lines from Gaston and Bayard, in which the friends of M. de La Fayette saw the exact outline of his character, written by her own hand:

“ . . . *Why talk of youth,  
When all the ripe experience of the old  
Dwells with him? In his schemes profound and cool,  
He acts with wise precaution, and reserves  
For times of action his impetuous fire.  
To guard the camp, to scale the leaguered wall,  
Or dare the hottest of the fight, are toils  
That suit th’ impetuous bearing of his youth;  
Yet like the grey-hair’d veteran he can shun  
The field of peril. Still before my eyes  
I place his bright example, for I love  
His lofty courage and his prudent thought.  
Gifted like him a warrior has no age.*”<sup>1</sup>

These lines were applauded and encored at the French

the young marquis married the daughter of the Duc d’Ayen, the eldest son of the Maréchal de Noailles; and the War of American Independence having broken out, he joined the insurgents in 1777. *Note by the Editors.*

<sup>1</sup> “During the American War, a general officer in the service of the United States advanced with a score of men under the English batteries to reconnoitre their position. His aide-de-camp, struck by a ball, fell at his side. The officers and orderly dragoons fled precipitately. The general, though under the fire of the cannon, approached the wounded man to see whether he had any signs of life remaining, or whether any help could be afforded him. Finding the wound had been mortal, he turned his eyes away with emotion, and slowly rejoined the group, which had got out of the range of the pieces. This instance of courage and humanity took place at the Battle of Monmouth. General Clinton, who commanded the English troops, knew that the Marquis de La Fayette generally rode a white horse; it was upon a white horse that the general officer, who retired so slowly, was mounted: Clinton desired the gunners not to fire. This noble forbearance probably saved M. de La Fayette’s life, for it was he himself. At that time he was but twenty-two years of age.” (*Historical Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI.*) *Note by the Editor.*



## THE KING'S EDICT

theatre: all was delirium. There was no class of person that did not heartily approve of the support given openly by the French Government to the cause of American Independence. The constitution desired for the new nation was digested at Paris, and while liberty, equality, and the rights of man were commented upon by the Condorcets, Baillys, Mirabeaus, &c., the minister Ségur published the King's edict, which by repealing that of 1st November, 1750, declared all officers not noble by four generations incapable of filling the rank of captain, and denied all military rank to those who were not gentlemen, excepting sons of the Chevaliers de Saint Louis.<sup>1</sup> The injustice and absurdity of this law was, no doubt, a secondary cause of the Revolution. To be aware of the extent of despair, nay, of rage, with which this law inspired the Third Estate, we should form part of that honourable class. The provinces were full of plebeian families, who for ages had lived as people of property upon their own domains, and paid the subsidies. If these persons had several sons, they would place one in the King's service, one in the Church, another in the Order of Malta, as a *chevalier servant d'armes*, and one in the magistracy, while the eldest preserved the paternal manor. If the family were situated in a country

<sup>1</sup> We read the following anecdote upon this subject, by Champfort. He tells it with his usual caustic feeling. "M. de Ségur, having published an ordinance which prohibited the admission of any other than gentlemen into the artillery corps, and, on the other hand, none but well-educated persons being proper for admission, a curious scene took place: the Abbé Bossat, examiner of the pupils, gave certificates only to plebeians, while Cherin gave them only to gentlemen. Out of one hundred pupils, there were not above four or five who were qualified in both respects." *Note by the Editor.*

## DISPOSITION OF BENEFICES

celebrated for wine, they would, besides selling their own produce, add a kind of commission trade in the wines of the canton. I have seen an individual of this justly respected class, who had been long employed in diplomatic business, and even honoured with the title of Minister Plenipotentiary, the son-in-law and nephew of colonels and *majors de place*, and, on his mother's side, nephew of a lieutenant-general with a *cordon rouge*, unable to introduce his sons as junior lieutenants into a regiment of foot.

Another decision of the court, which could not be announced by an edict, was that all ecclesiastical benefices, from the humblest priory to the richest abbey, should in future be appanages of nobility. Being the son of a village surgeon, the Abbé de Vermond, who had great influence in the disposition of benefices, was particularly struck with the justice of this decree by the King.

During the absence of the abbé in an excursion he made for his health, I prevailed on the Queen to write a postscript to the petition of a priest, one of my friends, who was soliciting a priory near his cure, with the intention of retiring to it. I obtained for him his object. On the abbé's return he heard of this, came to my house, and told me very harshly, that I acted in a manner quite contrary to the King's wishes in obtaining similar favours; that the wealth of the Church was for the future to be invariably devoted to the support of the poorer nobility; that it was the interest of the State that it should be so; and a ple-

## DISPOSITION OF BENEFICES

beian priest, happy in a good cure, had only to remain a priest.

Can we be astonished at the part shortly afterwards taken by the deputies of the Third Estate when called to the States General? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [In 1788-89, before the elections to the States General, the *curés*, following the example of those of Dauphiné, formed societies for pressing their claims to obtain a reasonable stipend. Despite the efforts of the higher clergy, the *curés* formed two-thirds of the deputies of the Order of the Clergy in May, 1789; and more than half of those deputies joined the *Tiers-État* in the middle of June.]

## CHAPTER X

ABOUT the close of the last century, several of the Northern sovereigns became fond of travelling. Christian III, King of Denmark, visited the court of France in 1763, under the reign of Louis XV. We have seen the King of Sweden and Joseph II at Versailles. The Grand Duke of Russia, son of Catherine II (afterwards Paul I), and the Princess of Würtemberg, his wife, likewise resolved to visit France. They travelled under the titles of the Comte and Comtesse du Nord. They were presented on the 20th of May, 1782. The Queen received them with infinite grace and dignity. On the day of their arrival at Versailles they dined in private with the King and Queen.

The plain, unassuming appearance of Paul I pleased Louis XVI. He spoke to him with more confidence and cheerfulness than he had done to Joseph II. The Comtesse du Nord was not at first so successful with the Queen. This lady was of a fine height, very fat for her age, with all the stiffness of the German demeanour, well informed, and perhaps displayed her acquirements with rather too much confidence.<sup>1</sup> At the moment the Comte and Comtesse

<sup>1</sup> [The Grand Duke Paul (he did not ascend the throne until November, 1796) married, as his second wife, in 1776 Princess Sophie of Würtemberg-Montbéliard, who was of a bright and vivacious temperament. Their reception at Versailles on May 20, 1782, was most magnificent. Paul ventured to ask the Queen how she had treated the Du Barry. She replied that she tried to avoid offending Louis XV or giving any mark of approval to his mistress. (Arnett, *Correspondance secrète de Mercy*, vol. i, pp. 110, 111.)]



## *VISIT OF THE GRAND DUKE PAUL*

du Nord were presented the Queen was exceedingly nervous. She withdrew into her closet before she went into the room where she was to dine with the illustrious travellers, and asked for a glass of water, confessing, "she had just experienced how much more difficult it was to play the part of a queen in the presence of other sovereigns, or of princes born to become so, than before courtiers."

She soon recovered from her first confusion, and made her reappearance with ease and confidence. The dinner was tolerably cheerful, and the conversation very animated.

Brilliant entertainments were given at court in honour of the King of Sweden and the Comte du Nord. They were received in private by the King and Queen; but they were treated with much more ceremony than the Emperor, and their Majesties always appeared to me to be very cautious before these personages. However, the King one day asked the Grand Duke of Russia if it were true that he could not rely on the fidelity of any one of those who accompanied him. The prince answered without hesitation, and before a considerable number of persons, that he should be very sorry to have with him even a poodle dog that was much attached to him, because his mother would take care to have it thrown into the Seine, with a stone round its neck, before he should leave Paris. This reply, which I myself heard, quite thrilled me with horror, because it either depicted the disposition

## CARDINAL DE ROHAN'S INTRUSION

of Catherine, or expressed the prince's prejudice against her.<sup>1</sup>

The Queen gave the grand duke a supper at Trianon, and had the gardens illuminated as they had been for the Emperor. The Cardinal de Rohan very indiscreetly ventured to introduce himself there without the Queen's knowledge. Having always been treated with the utmost coolness ever since his return from Vienna, he had not dared to ask her for permission to see the illumination; but he persuaded the porter of Trianon to admit him as soon as the Queen should have set off for Versailles, and his Eminence engaged to remain in the porter's lodge until all the carriages should have left the château. He did not keep his word, and while the porter was busy in the discharge of his duty, the cardinal who had kept on his red stockings, and merely thrown a greatcoat over him, went down into the garden, and, with an air of mystery, drew up in two different places to see the royal family and suite pass by.

Her Majesty was highly offended at this piece of boldness, and the next day ordered the porter to be discharged. There was a general feeling of disgust at the cardinal's treachery to the unfortunate man, and of commiseration towards the latter for the loss of his place. Affected at the misfortune of the father of a family, I obtained his forgiveness; and since that time I have often regretted the feeling of the moment which induced me to interfere. The notoriety of the

<sup>1</sup> See *Correspondance de Grimm*, vol. i, p. 454. *Note by the Editors.*

## VISIT OF THE KING OF SWEDEN

discharge of the porter of Trianon, and the odium that circumstance would have fixed upon the cardinal, would have made the Queen's dislike to him still more publicly known, and would probably have prevented the scandalous and too famous intrigue of the necklace. But for the artful manner in which the cardinal introduced himself into the gardens of Trianon; but for the air of mystery which he affected whenever the Queen met him there, he would not have been able to say that he had been deceived by any emissary between the Queen and himself.

The Queen, who was much prejudiced against the King of Sweden, received him very coldly.<sup>1</sup> All that was said of the private character of that sovereign, his connection with the Comte de Vergennes from the time of the revolution of Sweden, in 1772, the character of his favourite Armfelt,<sup>2</sup> and the prejudices of the monarch himself against the Swedes who were well received at the court of Versailles, formed the grounds of this dislike. He came one day uninvited and unexpected, and requested to dine with the Queen. The Queen received him in the little closet, and sent for me immediately. She desired me

<sup>1</sup> Gustavus the Third, King of Sweden, travelled in France under the title of Comte d'Haga. Upon his accession to the throne, he managed the revolution which prostrated the authority of the Senate, with equal skill, coolness, and courage. He was assassinated in 1792, at a masked ball, by Ankerstroem.  
*Note by the Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> [Gustavus Armfelt, the son of a poor Finnish nobleman, was born in 1757. His fine presence and high spirit attracted the notice of Gustavus III, who made him his travelling companion. He distinguished himself greatly in the campaign of 1789-90 against Russia. He was the last person whom Gustavus III embraced on his death-bed.]

## THE PEACE WITH ENGLAND

to send for her clerk of the kitchen, that she might be informed whether there was a proper dinner to set before Comte d'Haga, and to add to it if necessary. The King of Sweden assured her that there would be enough for him ; and I could not help smiling at the idea of augmenting the dinner provided for the King and Queen, not even half of which would have made its appearance had they dined in private. The Queen looked significantly and seriously at me, and I withdrew. In the evening she asked me why I had looked so astonished when she ordered me to add to her dinner, saying that I ought instantly to have seen that she was giving the King of Sweden a lesson for his presumption. I owned to her that the scene had appeared to me so much in the city style, that I had involuntarily thought of the cutlets on the grid-iron, and the omelette, which in families in middling circumstances serve to piece out short commons. She was highly diverted with my answer, and repeated it to the King, who also laughed heartily at it.

The peace with England gave great satisfaction to all classes of society interested in the national honour. The departure of the English commissary from Dunkirk, who had been fixed at that place ever since the shameful peace of 1763, as inspector of our navy, occasioned an ecstasy of joy.<sup>1</sup> The Government prudently communicated to the Englishman the order for his departure, before the treaty was made public.

<sup>1</sup> [The Peace of Paris (1763) imposed on France the irksome condition of keeping Dunkirk dismantled. The Peace of Versailles reversed this.]



## ENGLISH POUR INTO PARIS

But for that precaution the populace would have probably committed some excess or other, in order to make the agent of English power feel the effects of the resentment which was constantly increasing during his stay at that port. Those engaged in trade were the only persons dissatisfied with the treaty of 1783. That article, which provided for the free admission of English goods, annihilated at one blow the trade of Rouen and the other manufacturing towns throughout the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> French industry has since balanced the account with that superiority which secured to England the exclusive trade of the whole world. The English poured into Paris. A considerable number of them were presented at court. The Queen paid them marked attention; doubtless she wished them to distinguish between the esteem she had for their noble nation, and the political views of the French Government in the support it had afforded to the Americans. Discontent was, however, strongly manifested at court, in consequence of the marks of favour bestowed by the Queen upon the English noblemen; these attentions were called infatuations. This was illiberal; and the Queen justly complained of such absurd jealousy.

The journey to Fontainebleau, and the winter at

<sup>1</sup> [Incorrect. The Treaty of Versailles (Article 18) merely stipulated that new commercial arrangements should be made "on the basis of reciprocity and mutual convenience." But nothing was done until the year 1786. In September of that year was signed the famous commercial treaty between England and France, to the effects of which Madame Campan here refers in exaggerated terms. For its results, see J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival*, pp. 345-348.]

## THE QUEEN'S UNEXPLAINED GRIEF

Paris, and at court, were extremely brilliant. The spring brought back with it those amusements which the Queen began to prefer to the splendour of fêtes. The most perfect harmony subsisted between the King and Queen; I never saw but one difference between the august couple. It was soon dispelled. The cause of it is still perfectly unknown to me.

My father-in-law, whose penetration and experience I respected greatly, recommended me, when he saw me placed in the service of a young Queen, to shun all kinds of confidence. "It procures," said he, "but a very fleeting, and at the same time dangerous sort of favour. Serve with zeal to the best of your judgment, and never do more than obey. Instead of setting your wits to work to discover why an order, or a commission which may appear of consequence, is given to you, use them to prevent the possibility of your knowing anything of the matter." I had occasion to avail myself of this wise and useful lesson. One morning, at Trianon, I went into the Queen's chamber when she was in bed. There were letters lying upon the bed, and she was weeping bitterly. Her tears were mingled with sobs, which she occasionally interrupted by exclamations of "Ah! that I were dead!—wretches! monsters! What have I done to them?" I offered her orange-flower water and ether. "Leave me," said she, "if you love me: it would be better to kill me at once." At this moment she threw her arm over my shoulder and began weeping afresh. I saw that some weighty, but concealed

## *THE QUEEN'S UNEXPLAINED GRIEF*

trouble oppressed her heart, that she wanted a confidante, and that that confidante ought to be no other than her friend. I told her so, and suggested sending for the Duchesse de Polignac: this she strongly opposed. I renewed my arguments and solicitations to procure her the consolation of a disclosure of which she stood in need, and her opposition grew weaker. I disengaged myself from her arms, and ran to the ante-chamber, where I knew that a horseman always waited, ready to mount, and start at a moment's warning for Versailles. I ordered him to go full speed and tell the Duchesse de Polignac that the Queen was very uneasy, and desired to see her instantly. The duchess always had a carriage ready. In less than ten minutes she was at the Queen's door. I was the only person there, having been forbidden to send for the other women. Madame de Polignac came in; the Queen held out her arms to her; the duchess rushed towards her. I heard her sobs renewed, and withdrew.

A quarter of an hour afterwards the Queen, who was become calmer, rang to be dressed. I sent her woman in; she put on her gown and retired to her boudoir with the duchess. Very soon afterwards the Comte d'Artois arrived from Compiègne, where he had been with the King. He hastily crossed the ante-chamber and the chamber, and eagerly inquired where the Queen was. He remained half an hour with her and the duchess, and on coming out told me the Queen asked for me. I found her seated on her couch

## THE QUEEN'S UNEXPLAINED GRIEF

by the side of her friend; her features had resumed their usual cheerful and gracious appearance. She held out her hand to me, and said to the duchess, "I know I have made her so uncomfortable this morning, that I must set her poor heart at ease." She then added, "You must have seen, on some fine summer's day, a black cloud suddenly appear and threaten to pour down upon the country and lay it waste. The lightest wind drives it away, and the blue sky and serene weather are restored. This is just the image of what has happened to me this morning." She afterwards told me that "the King would return from Compiègne after hunting there, and sup with her; that I must send for her purveyor, to select with him, from his bills of fare, all such dishes as the King liked best; that she would have no others served up in the evening at her table; and that this was a mark of attention that she wished the King to observe." The Duchesse de Polignac also took me by the hand, and told me how happy she was that she had been with the Queen at a moment when she stood in need of a friend. I never knew what could have created in the Queen so lively and so transient an alarm; but I guessed from the particular care she took respecting the King, that attempts had been made to irritate him against her; that the malice of her enemies had been promptly discovered and counteracted by the King's penetration and attachment; and that the Comte d'Artois had hastened to bring her intelligence of it.

It was, I think, in the summer of 1787, during



## DE BRISSAC'S MISSION,

one of the Trianon excursions, that the Queen of Naples sent the Chevalier de Brissac to her Majesty, on a secret mission relative to a projected marriage between the hereditary prince, her son, and Madame, the King's daughter; in the absence of the lady of honour he addressed himself to me. Notwithstanding he said a great deal to me about the close confidence with which the Queen of Naples honoured him, and about his letters of credit, I thought he had quite the air of an adventurer.<sup>1</sup> He had, indeed, private letters for the Queen, and his mission was not feigned; he talked to me very inconsiderately even before his admission, and entreated me to do all that lay in my power to dispose the Queen's mind in favour of his sovereign's wishes. I declined it, assuring him that it did not belong to me to meddle with State affairs. He endeavoured, but in vain, to prove to me that the union contemplated by the Queen of Naples ought not to be looked upon in that light.

I procured M. de Brissac the audience he desired, but without suffering myself even to seem acquainted with the object of his mission. The Queen told me what it was. She thought him a person ill chosen for the occasion, and yet she thought that the Queen, her sister, had done very well in not making use of a man fit to be avowed, it being impossible that what she solicited should take place. I had an opportunity on this occasion, as indeed on many others, of judg-

<sup>1</sup> I know that he afterwards spent several years shut up in the Château de l'Œuf. *Note by Madame Campan.*

## TROUBLES OF THE COURT OF NAPLES

ing to what extent the Queen valued and loved France and the dignity of our court. She then told me that Madame, in marrying her cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, would not lose her rank as daughter of the Queen; and that her situation would be far preferable to that of queen of any other country; that there was nothing in Europe to be compared with the court of France; and that it would be necessary, in order to avoid exposing a French princess to feelings of deep regret, in case she should be married to a foreign prince, to take her from the palace of Versailles at seven years of age, and send her immediately to the court in which she was to dwell; and that at twelve it would be too late; for recollections and comparisons would ruin the happiness of all the rest of her life. The Queen looked upon the fate of her sisters as far beneath her own, and frequently mentioned the mortifications inflicted by the court of Spain upon her sister, the Queen of Naples,<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>The following extract may perhaps assist in pointing out the motive of these mortifications. It shows, at least very plausibly, how the Empress Maria Theresa hoped to promote her extensive schemes by the alliance of the Archduchess Caroline with the King of Naples, and what obstacles the Spanish branch of the Bourbons presented to designs, the depth of which did not pass unperceived by them.

The observations about to be given are from the *Historical Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, by the Abbé Soulavie; but the testimony of Comte d'Orloff, in the sensible, clear, and instructive work which he has published on the kingdom of Naples, gives them great weight. We quote a passage of some length from M. d'Orloff's work (see *Historical Illustrations*, Note XIX, p. 307), and we recommend the perusal of it, because it describes truly, and in an interesting manner, the empire which Queen Caroline had acquired over her husband, the character of the minister Acton, the just grounds of the resentment felt by the court of Madrid, and the part played by France among all these differences. This is what the Abbé Soulavie says on the subject:

“Under the flourishing reigns of the House of Bourbon, France had fixed

## ACTON AND QUEEN CAROLINE

the necessity she was under of imploring the mediation of the King of France.

She showed me several letters she had received from the Queen of Naples relative to her differences with the court of Madrid respecting the minister Acton.<sup>1</sup> She thought him useful to her people, inas-

one of its branches in Spain, which again had thrown out scions into Italy. Maria Theresa was jealous of this. Inheriting all the ambition of the House of Austria, and all its views upon Italy, she had promised herself, during a profound peace, to reconquer that beautiful country by stratagem, by giving to the court of Naples an archduchess brought up at Vienna, and never likely to forget that she was the guardian of the interests of her family at Naples. Queen Caroline ably seconded the views of her mother; seeing in the city of Naples nothing more than a property formerly Austrian, and particularly insecure in the hands of Ferdinand, and being remarkably apt at creating ministers submissive to her will, at retaining and defending them, and detaching them from the court of Madrid, where the stem of the Neapolitan branch of the Bourbons reigned, she succeeded in giving her husband a disinclination to the Family Compact, in which the principal strength of the descendants of Louis XIV lay, so devoted was she to her brother Joseph, the only divinity she adored.

“This conduct of Caroline, Queen of Naples, and the precautions taken by the House of Austria in all its treaties of peace with France to preserve some hold over Italy, develop the views of the House of Austria respecting that ancient inheritance, of which it had been deprived by the courage and policy of the Bourbons. But for the firmness of Don Carlos, King of Naples, upon his accession to the throne of Spain, Austria would have repossessed that ancient domain, by virtue of the reversionary clauses which Maria Theresa had artfully introduced into the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and which she had again procured to be inserted in the treaty of 1758; an evident proof that Austria has not lost sight of the project of a new settlement in the bosom of Italy.” Recent events add greatly to the weight of these conjectures respecting the ambitious policy of the House of Austria. *Note by the Editor.\**

<sup>1</sup> [Sir John Francis Edward Acton, sixth baronet (1736-1811), was born in Besançon. He entered the naval service of Tuscany, and in 1779 was appointed to reorganise the Neapolitan Navy. The favour of Queen Caroline and his own intrigues gained him the posts successively of Minister of Marine, Minister of War, Director of Finance, and finally Chief Minister. He was hostile to France.]

*\* [Soulavie's statements are inexact. By the Austro-French Treaty of December, 1758 (due largely to Choiseul), Maria Theresa merely renounced her former reversionary claims to Parma, Placenza, and Guastalla, while France urged Carlos, King of Naples, to renounce his claims to the domains of the Medicis and Farnese. Austria's need of French help, and the desire of the court of Versailles to secure the aid of Spain against England, rendered impracticable any designs that Maria Theresa cherished for the recovery of the former Hapsburg possessions in Italy, so long as the Seven Years' War continued. Further, by Article 3 of the Family Compact of August 15, 1761, France guaranteed Naples and Parma to the Spanish Bourbons, who then held them; and this precluded all thought of Austria seizing them, so long as that Compact held good.]*



## QUEEN CAROLINE AND LAS CASAS

much as he was a man of considerable information and great activity. In these letters she minutely acquainted her Majesty with the nature of the affronts she had received, and represented Mr. Acton to her as a man whom malevolence itself could not suppose capable of interesting her otherwise than by his services. She had had to suffer the impertinences of a Spaniard named Las Casas, who had been sent to her by the King, her father-in-law, to persuade her to dismiss Mr. Acton from the business of the State, and from her intimacy. She complained bitterly to the Queen, her sister, of the disgusting proceedings of this *chargé d'affaires*, whom she told, in order to convince him of the nature of the feelings which attached her to Mr. Acton, that she would have portraits and busts of him executed by the most eminent artists of Italy, and that she would then send them to the King of Spain, to prove that nothing but the desire to retain a man of superior capacity had induced her to bestow on him the favour he enjoyed. This Las Casas dared to answer her, that it would be a useless trouble; that the ugliness of a man did not always render him displeasing; and that the King of Spain had too much experience not to know that there was no accounting for the caprices of a woman.

This audacious reply filled the Queen of Naples with indignation, and her emotion caused her to miscarry on the same day. Through the intermediation of Louis XVI the Queen of Naples obtained complete satis-



## THE QUEEN'S MAD LOVER

faction in this affair, and Mr. Acton was continued in his post as Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup>

Among the characteristics which denoted the great goodness of the Queen, her respect for personal liberty should have a place. I have seen her put up with the most troublesome importunities from people whose minds were deranged, rather than have them taken up. Her patient kindness was put to a very disagreeable trial by an old member of the Bordeaux Parliament, named Castelnau: this man declared himself a lover of the Queen, and was generally known by that appellation. For ten successive years did he follow the court in all its excursions. Pale and wan as people who are out of their senses usually are, his sinister appearance occasioned the most uncomfortable sensations. During the two hours that the Queen's public card-parties lasted, he would remain fixed opposite her Majesty. He placed himself in the same manner before her eyes at chapel, and never failed to be at the King's dinner, or the *grand couvert*. At the theatre, he invariably seated himself as near the Queen's box as possible. He always set off for Fontainebleau or Saint Cloud the day before the court, and when her Majesty arrived at her various residences, the first person she met on getting out of her carriage was this melancholy madman. He never spoke to anyone. While the Queen was at Petit Trianon the passion of this unhappy man became still

<sup>1</sup> See under Note XIX, p. 307, particulars respecting this minister, and his conduct towards France. *Note by the Editor.*

## THE QUEEN'S MAD LOVER

more annoying. He would hastily swallow his morsel at some eating-house, and spend all the rest of the day, even when it rained, in going round and round the garden, always walking at the edge of the moat. The Queen frequently met him when she was walking either alone or with her children, and yet she would not suffer any violence to be used to relieve her from this intolerable annoyance. Having one day given to M. de Sèze permission to enter Trianon, she sent to desire he would come to me, and directed me to inform that celebrated advocate of M. de Castelnau's derangement, and then to send for him, that M. de Sèze might have some conversation with him. He talked to him nearly an hour, and made considerable impression upon his mind; and at last M. de Castelnau requested me to inform the Queen that positively, since his presence was disagreeable to her, he would retire to his province. The Queen was very much rejoiced, and desired me to express her full satisfaction to M. de Sèze. Half an hour after M. de Sèze had gone, the unhappy madman was announced to me. He came to tell me that he withdrew his promise, that he had not sufficient command of himself to give up seeing the Queen as often as possible. This new determination was a disagreeable message to take to her Majesty; but how was I affected at hearing her say, "Well, let him annoy me! but let him not be deprived of the pleasure of being free."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the arrest of the King and Queen at Varennes, this unfortunate Castelnau attempted to starve himself to death. The people in whose house he lived

## ESTEEM FOR THE KING

The direct influence of the Queen on affairs during the earlier years of the reign was only shown in her obliging exertions to obtain from the King a revision of the decrees in two celebrated causes.<sup>1</sup>

If the King did not inspire the Queen with a lively feeling of love, it is at least quite certain that she yielded him a mixed tribute of enthusiasm and affection, for the goodness of his disposition and the equity of which he gave so many accumulated proofs throughout his reign. One evening she returned very late: she came out of the King's closet, and said to M. de Misery and myself, drying her eyes, which were filled with tears, "You see me weeping, but do not be uneasy at it: these are the sweetest tears that a wife can shed; they are caused by the impression which the justice and goodness of the King have made upon me; he has just complied with my request for a revision of the proceedings against Messieurs de Bellegarde and de Moutier, victims of the Duc d'Aiguillon's hatred to the Duc de Choiseul. He has been equally just to the Duc de Guines<sup>2</sup> in his affair with Le Tort. It is

becoming uneasy at his absence, had the door of his room forced open, where he was found stretched senseless on the floor. I do not know what became of him after the 10th of August. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>1</sup> The Queen did not venture to meddle with those two causes further than to solicit a revision of them; for it was contrary to her principles to interfere in matters of justice, and never did she avail herself of her influence to bias the tribunals. The Duchesse de Praslin, through a criminal caprice, carried her enmity to her husband so far, as to disinherit her children in favour of the family of M. de Guéménée. The Duchesse de Choiseul, who was warmly interested in this affair, one day entreated the Queen, in my presence, at least to condescend to ask the First President when the cause would be called on; the Queen replied, that she could not even do that, for it would manifest an interest which it was her duty not to show. *Note by Madame Campan.*

<sup>2</sup> [Tort de la Sonde, secretary of the Comte de Guines when ambassador to

## THE DUC DE GUINES

a happy thing for a Queen to be able to admire and esteem him who has admitted her to a participation in his throne ; and as to you, I congratulate you upon your having to live under the sceptre of so virtuous a sovereign." Our tears of affection mingled with those of the Queen ; she condescended to suffer us to kiss her charming hands. This affecting scene is not yet effaced from my recollection—and was it under the sway of sovereigns so merciful and so feeling that we endured horrors that the cruellest tyranny would not have excused ? And were these the beings, so august, so formed by divine Providence for the happiness of the people, whom we have had the pain of seeing fall victims to fury equally senseless and barbarous ?

The Queen laid before the King all the memorials of the Duc de Guines, who, during his embassy to England, was involved in difficulties by a secretary who speculated in the public funds in London on his own account, but in such a manner as to throw a suspicion of it on the ambassador. Messieurs de Vergennes and Turgot,<sup>1</sup> bearing but little good-will to the Duc de Guines, who was the friend of the Duc

London, accused his chief of using his knowledge as a diplomatist for speculating in the public funds. The count was of the Choiseul faction, which defended him, and disgraced his opponents. The title of Duke was given to de Guines as consolation, while Tort was obliged to make the *amende* as calumniator.]

<sup>1</sup> [Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de l'Aulne (1727–1781), famous economist and financier, was in 1774 appointed Comptroller-General of Finance. He introduced many financial reforms, but the courtiers and privileged classes combined against him and he was removed in 1776. He has been described as "the one legislator who might have saved France."]



## *DE BELLEGARDE AND DE MOUTIER*

de Choiseul, were not disposed to render the ambassador any service. The Queen succeeded in fixing the King's particular attention on this affair, and the innocence of the Duc de Guines triumphed through the equity of Louis XVI.

An incessant underhand war was carried on between the friends and partisans of M. de Choiseul, who were called the Austrians, and those who sided with Messieurs d'Aiguillon, de Maurepas, and de Vergennes, who, for the same reason, kept up the intrigues carried on at court, and in Paris, against the Queen. Marie Antoinette on her part supported those who had suffered in this political quarrel, and it was this feeling which led her to ask for a revision of the proceedings against Messieurs de Bellegarde and de Moutier. The first, a colonel and inspector of artillery, and the second, a proprietor of a foundry at Saint Étienne, were, under the ministry of the Duc d'Aiguillon, condemned to imprisonment for twenty years and a day, for having withdrawn from the arsenals of France, by order of the Duc de Choiseul, a vast number of muskets which were thrown out as being of no value except as old iron, while, in point of fact, the greater part of those muskets were immediately embarked and sold to the Americans. It appears that the Duc de Choiseul imparted to the Queen, as grounds of defence for the accused, the political views which led him to authorise that reduction and sale in the manner in which it had been executed. What rendered the case of Messieurs de Bellegarde and de

## THE QUEEN'S ELEGANT LANGUAGE

Moutier more unfavourable was that the artillery officer who made the reduction in the capacity of inspector was, through a clandestine marriage, brother-in-law of the owner of the foundry who became the purchaser of the rejected arms. The innocence of the two prisoners was nevertheless made apparent; and they came to Versailles with their wives and children, to throw themselves at the feet of their benefactress. This affecting scene took place in the grand gallery, at the entrance to the Queen's apartment. She wished to restrain the women from kneeling, saying, that "they had only had justice done them; and that she ought at that very moment to be congratulated upon the most substantial happiness attendant upon her station, that of laying just appeals before the King."<sup>1</sup>

On every occasion when she had to express her thoughts in public, the Queen always used the most appropriate, elegant, and striking language, notwithstanding the difficulty a foreigner might be expected to experience. She answered all addresses herself, and persevered in that custom, which she first learned at the court of Maria Theresa. The princesses of the House of Bourbon had long ceased to take the trouble of pronouncing their answers in such cases. Madame Adelaide blamed the Queen for not doing as they did, assuring her that it was quite sufficient to mutter a

<sup>1</sup> There is an engraving of the time, which represents this scene of gratitude and kindness tolerably well. This piece has the merit of reproducing accurately places, costumes, and the personal likenesses of the principal personages. Among the latter, we recognise M. the Comte de Provence (his Majesty Louis XVIII), Madame the Comtesse de Provence, M. the Comte and Madame the Comtesse d'Artois, and the Emperor Joseph II. *Note by the Editor.*

## CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY

few words which might sound like an answer, while the addressers, solely occupied with what they themselves had just been saying, would always take it for granted that a proper answer had been returned. The Queen saw that idleness alone had pointed out such a course of proceeding, and that as the practice even of muttering a few words showed the necessity of answering in some way, it must be more proper to reply plainly, and distinctly, and in the best style possible. Sometimes, indeed, when apprised of the subject of the address, she would write down her answer in the morning, not to learn it by heart, but in order to settle the ideas or sentiments she wished to introduce into it.

The influence of the Comtesse de Polignac increased daily, and her friends availed themselves of it to effect changes in the ministry. The dismissal of M. de Montbarrey, a man without talents or character, was generally approved of. It was justly attributed to the Queen. He had been placed in administration by M. de Maurepas, and backed by his aged wife: both of course became more inveterate than ever against the Queen and the Polignac circle.

The appointments of M. de Ségur to the place of Minister of War, and of M. de Castries<sup>1</sup> to that of Minister of Marine, were wholly the work of that circle. The Queen always dreaded making ministers;

<sup>1</sup> [Charles Eugène Gabriel de la Croix, Marquis de Castries (1727-1801), was lieutenant in the King's regiment at the age of six. After a military career he became Minister of Marine in 1780, and Marshal of France in 1783. He left France at the beginning of the Revolution.]

## APPOINTMENT OF M. DE SÉGUR

her favourite often wept when the men of her circle compelled her to interfere. Men blame women for meddling in business, and yet in courts it is continually the men themselves who make use of the influence of the women, in matters with which the latter ought to have nothing to do.

On the day when M. de Ségur was presented to the Queen on his new appointment, she said to me: "You have just seen a minister of my making. I am very glad, as far as regards the King's service, that he is appointed, for I think the selection a very good one; but I almost regret the part I have taken in this appointment. I take a responsibility upon myself. I was fortunate in being free from any; and, in order to relieve myself from this as much as possible, I have just promised M. de Ségur, and that upon my word of honour, not to back any petition, nor to clog any of his operations, by solicitations on behalf of my *protégés*."

During the first administration of M. Necker,<sup>1</sup> whose ambition had not then drawn him into schemes repugnant to his better judgment, and whose views appeared to the Queen to be very judicious, she indulged in hopes of the restoration of the finances. Knowing that M. de Maurepas wished to drive M.

<sup>1</sup> [Jacques Necker (1732-1804), the celebrated Swiss financier, was appointed Director-General of Finance in 1777. He instituted reforms, restored the public credit, and his famous *Compte rendu* of 1781 was the first public statement of the revenue and expenses of the State. He resigned in 1781, but was recalled in 1788 to succeed Brienne as Chief Minister. On his dismissal in 1789, the populace of Paris stormed the Bastille. Recalled to office after that event, he failed to restore the credit of France, and retired to Switzerland in September, 1790.]



## NECKER AND DE MAUREPAS

Necker to give in his resignation, she urged the latter to have patience until the death of an old man whom the King kept about him from a fondness for his first choice, and out of respect for his advanced age. She even went so far as to tell him that M. de Maurepas was always ill, and that his end could not be very distant. M. Necker would not wait for that event. The Queen's prediction was fulfilled. M. de Maurepas ended his days immediately after a journey to Fontainebleau, in 1781.<sup>1</sup>

M. Necker had retired. He had been exasperated by a piece of treachery in the old minister, for which he could not forgive him. I knew something of this intrigue at the time it took place; it has since been fully explained to me by Madame la Maréchale de Beauvau. M. Necker saw that his credit at court was drooping, and fearing lest that circumstance should injure his financial operations, he wrote to the King requesting his Majesty would grant him some favour which might show the public that he had not lost the confidence of his sovereign. He concluded his letter by pointing out five different requests—such an office, *or* such a mark of distinction, *or* such a badge of honour, and so on, and handed it to M. de Maurepas. The *ors* were changed into *ands*; and the King was

<sup>1</sup> "Louis XVI," says the *Biographie Universelle*, "deeply regretted Maurepas. During his last illness, he went himself to inform him of the birth of the dauphin, 'to announce it to his friend, and rejoice with him:' these were his very expressions. The day after his funeral, he said with an air of great affliction, 'Ah! I shall no longer hear my friend overhead every morning.'—A simple and affecting eulogy, though little merited by him who was the object of it." *Note by the Editor.*

## M. DE CALONNE APPOINTED

displeased at M. Necker's ambition, and the assurance with which he displayed it.

Madame la Maréchale de Beauvau assures me that Maréchal de Castries saw the minute of M. Necker's letter perfectly in accordance with what he had told him, and that he likewise saw the altered copy.<sup>1</sup>

The interest which the Queen took in M. Necker decreased during his retirement, and at last changed into strong prejudice against him. He wrote too much about the measures he would have pursued, and the benefits that would have resulted to the State from them. The ministers who succeeded him thought their operations embarrassed by the care that M. Necker and his partisans incessantly took to occupy the public with his plans; his friends were too ardent. The Queen discerned a party spirit in these combinations, and sided wholly with his enemies.

After those inefficient comptrollers-general, Messieurs Joly de Fleury and d'Ormesson, it became necessary to resort to a man of more acknowledged talent, and the Queen's friends at that time combining with the Comte d'Artois, and, from I know not what motive, with M. de Vergennes, got M. de Calonne<sup>2</sup> appointed. The Queen was highly displeased at this, and her close intimacy with the Duchesse de Polignac

<sup>1</sup> I have this anecdote under that lady's hand. *Note by Madame Camfan.*

<sup>2</sup> [Charles Alexandre de Calonne (1734-1802) was in 1783 appointed Comptroller-General of Finance. The expenditure was greater than the revenue, but Calonne skilfully disguised this state of affairs by an extravagant show of prosperity. In 1786 he advised an Assembly of Notables, which met in 1787 — an unintentional, but pronounced step towards the Revolution. The state of the finances then became known, and Calonne was dismissed.]

## PRIVATE PERPLEXITIES

thenceforth began gradually to dissolve. It was at this period she said, that when sovereigns chose favourites, they raised powers about them, which, being flattered, at first for their masters' sake, were afterwards flattered for their own; formed a party in the State, acted alone, and caused the odium of their actions to fall upon the sovereigns to whom they owed their influence.

The inconveniences attendant on the private life of a sovereign then struck the Queen in all their bearings. She talked to me about it in confidence, and often told me that I was the only person aware of the vexations her social habits brought upon her; but that she must bear the anxieties of which she herself was the sole author; that the appearance of fickleness in a friendship such as that which she had contracted with the duchess, or a total rupture, would be attended with still greater evils, and could only produce fresh calamities. It was not that she had to reproach Madame de Polignac with a single fault which could make her regret the choice she had made of her for a friend, but she had not foreseen the inconvenience of having to support the friends of our friends, which society obliges one to do.

Her Majesty, continuing to converse with me upon the difficulties she had met with in private life, told me that ambitious men, without merit, sometimes found means to gain their ends by dint of importunity, and that she had to blame herself for having procured M. d'Adhémar to be appointed to the London embassy,

## PRIVATE PERPLEXITIES

merely because he teased her into it at the duchess's house. She added, however, to this avowal, that it was at a time of perfect peace with the English; that the minister knew the inefficiency of M. d'Adhémar as well as she did, and that he could do neither harm nor good.

Often, in conversations of unreserved frankness, the Queen owned that she had purchased rather dearly a piece of experience which would make her carefully watch over the conduct of her daughters-in-law; and that she would be particularly scrupulous about the qualifications of the ladies who might be their attendants; that no consideration of rank or favour should bias her in so important a choice. She attributed several of her youthful actions to a lady of great levity, whom she found in her palace on her arrival in France. She also determined to forbid the princesses whom she could control, the practice of singing with professors, and said sincerely, and with as much severity as her slanderers could have done, "I ought to have heard Garat sing, and not to have sung duets with him."<sup>1</sup> Thus impartially did she speak of her youth. What was not to be expected from her maturer age!

<sup>1</sup> See *Correspondance de Grimm*, année 1784, for further details relative to this celebrated singer. *Note by the Editor.*



# HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY MADAME CAMPAN

[Pages 89, 121]

## The Queen's Household

### *First office: The Superintendent*

QUEEN MARIE LECZINSKA, the wife of Louis XV, had Mademoiselle de Clermont, a princess of the blood, as the superintendent of her household. Mademoiselle de Clermont died, and the Queen requested the King not to have the vacancy filled, the privileges of the office of superintendent being so extensive that they were felt as a restraint on the sovereign; they included a right to nominate to employments, to determine differences between the holders of offices, to dismiss<sup>1</sup> or suspend the servants, &c. There was therefore no superintendent after Mademoiselle de Clermont; and Queen Marie Antoinette had none at the time of her accession. But shortly afterwards the Queen, interesting herself for the young Princesse de Lamballe, who was left a widow and childless, determined to give her greater personal consideration by fixing her at court, and therefore appointed her superintendent of her household. She constantly resided at Versailles in the commencement of her service, and was very scrupulous in the punctual execution of all the duties of her place. The Queen checked her a little in those which stood in the way of her inclinations, and the intimacy between the Queen and Madame de Polignac being afterwards formed, she attended the court with less assiduity. Her devoted attachment led her, at the moment when all the eminent persons in the kingdom were yielding to the system of emigration, to return to France, and not to leave the Queen, who was then deprived of all her friends, and of that intimate connection which had occasioned a kind of distance between the Queen and the superintendent. The tragic end of this interesting princess must heighten the feeling excited by her zeal and fidelity. The princess superintendent was, more-

<sup>1</sup> The servants were suspended by order of the head of the household for a fortnight, a month, or more. Dismissal was more common than suspension; but resignations were signed by the parties themselves. It must not be forgotten that all the offices were trusts, and that the holders of them had been sworn before the Queen, the superintendent, the lady of honour, or the first gentleman usher.

## HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

over, head of the Queen's council; but her functions in that capacity could only become important in case of a regency.

### *Lady of Honour: The Princesse de Chimay*

The place of lady of honour losing many of its advantages in consequence of the appointment of a superintendent, Madame la Maréchale de Mouchy gave in her resignation. When the Queen conferred that title upon the Princesse de Lamballe, the lady of honour appointed to the offices administered the oaths in the absence of the superintendent; made presentations, and sent invitations in the Queen's name for the excursions to Marly, Choisy, and Fontainebleau; also for balls, suppers, and hunting parties. All changes in the furniture, and the linen and laces for the bed and toilet, were likewise made under her orders. The head woman of the Queen's wardrobe managed these matters jointly with the lady of honour. Up to the time when M. de Silhouette was appointed comptroller-general, cloths, napkins, chemises, and lace had been renewed every three years; that minister prevailed on Louis XV to decide that they should be renewed only once in five years. M. Necker, during his first administration, increased the interval of renewal by two years, so that it took place only every seven years. The whole of the old articles belonged to the lady of honour. When a foreign princess was married to the heir-presumptive, or a son of France, it was the etiquette to go and meet her with her wedding clothes; the young princess was undressed in the pavilion usually built upon the frontiers for the occasion, and every article of her apparel, without exception, was changed; notwithstanding which, the foreign courts furnished their princesses also with rich wedding clothes which were considered the lawful perquisites of the lady of honour and the tirewoman. It is to be observed, that emoluments and profits of all kinds generally belonged to the great offices. On the death of Marie Leczinska, the whole of her chamber furniture was given up to the Comtesse de Noailles, afterwards Maréchale de Mouchy, with the exception of two large rock-crystal lustres which Louis XV ordered should be preserved as appurtenances to the crown. The tirewoman was entrusted with the care of ordering materials, robes, and court dresses, and of checking and paying bills; all accounts were submitted to her, and were paid only on her signature and by her order—from shoes up to Lyons embroidered dresses. I believe the fixed annual

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sum for this division of expenditure was one hundred thousand francs; but there might be additional sums when the funds appropriated to this purpose were insufficient. The tirewoman sold the cast-off gowns and ornaments for her own benefit; the lace for head-dresses, ruffles, and gowns was provided by her, and kept distinct from those of which the lady of honour had the direction. There was a secretary of the wardrobe, to whom the care of keeping the books, accounts of payments, and correspondence relating to this department was confided.

The tirewoman had, likewise, under her order a principal undertirewoman, charged with the care and preservation of all the Queen's dresses; two women to fold and press such articles as required it; two valets, and one porter of the wardrobe. The latter brought every morning into the Queen's apartments baskets covered with taffeta, containing all that she was to wear during the day, and large cloths of green taffeta covering the robes, and the full dresses. The valet of the wardrobe on duty presented every morning a large book to the first *femme de chambre*, containing patterns of the gowns, full dresses, undresses, &c. Every pattern was marked to show to which sort it belonged. The first *femme de chambre* presented this book to the Queen, on her awaking, with a pincushion; her Majesty stuck pins in those articles which she chose for the day: one for the dress, one for the afternoon undress, and one for the full evening dress for card or supper parties, in the private apartments. The book was then taken back to the wardrobe, and all that was wanted for the day was soon after brought in, in large taffeta wrappers. The wardrobe woman, who had the care of the linen, in her turn brought in a covered basket, containing two or three chemises, handkerchiefs, and napkins; the morning basket was called "*prêt du jour*:" in the evening she brought in one containing the night-gown, and night-cap, and the stockings for the next morning; this basket was called "*prêt de la nuit*:" they were in the department of the lady of honour, the tirewoman having nothing to do with the linen. Nothing was put in order or taken care of by the Queen's women. As soon as the toilet was over, the valets and porter belonging to the wardrobe were called in, and they carried all away in a heap, in the taffeta wrappers, to the tirewoman's wardrobe, where all were folded up again, hung up, examined, and cleaned with so much regularity and care that even the cast-off clothes scarcely looked as if they had been worn. The tirewoman's wardrobe con-



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sisted of three large rooms surrounded with closets, some furnished with drawers and others with shelves; there were also large tables in each of these rooms, on which the gowns and dresses were spread out and folded up.

For the winter the Queen had generally twelve full dresses, twelve undresses called fancy dresses, and twelve rich hoop petticoats for the card and supper parties in the smaller apartments.

She had as many for the summer. Those for the spring served likewise for the autumn. All these dresses were discarded at the end of each season, unless indeed she retained some that she particularly liked. I am not speaking of muslin or cambric muslin gowns, or others of the same kind; they were lately introduced; but such as these were not renewed at each returning season; they were kept several years. The chief women were charged with the keeping, care, and examination of the diamonds. This important duty was formerly confided to the tirewoman, but for many years had been included in the business of the first *femmes de chambre*.

### *The Queen's Bed-Chamber*

There was formerly but one first *femme de chambre*. The large income derived from the place, and the favour by which it was generally accompanied, rendered a division of it necessary. The Queen had two, and two reversioners. The incumbents were Madame de Misery, a daughter of the Comte de Chemant, and, by the side of her mother, who descended from a Montmorency, cousin to the Prince de Tingry, who always called her cousin, even before the Queen; and Madame Thibaut, formerly *femme de chambre* to Queen Marie Leczinska.

The reversioners were Madame Campan, and Madame Regnier de Jarjaie, whose husband was a staff-officer with the rank of colonel.

The duty of the chief of the *femmes de chambre* was to attend to the performance of the whole service of the bed-chamber, to receive the Queen's orders for her times of rising, dressing, going out, and making journeys. The *femmes de chambre* were, moreover, charged with the Queen's privy purse and the payment of pensions and gratuities. The diamonds, too, were entrusted to them. They did the honours of the service when the ladies of honour, or tirewomen were absent, and in the same manner acted for them in making presentations



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to the Queen. Their appointments did not exceed twelve thousand francs; but all the wax candles of the bed-chamber, closets, and card-room belonged to them daily, whether lighted or not, and this perquisite raised their income to more than fifty thousand francs each. The candles for the great closet of the saloon of the nobility, the room preceding the Queen's chamber, and those for the ante-chambers and corridors, belonged to the servants of the chamber. The undress gowns were, whenever left off, carried, by order of the firewoman, to the chief *femmes de chambre*. The court and full dresses, with all other accessories of the Queen's toilet, belonged to the firewoman herself.

The Queens were very circumspect in the choice of their principal women; they generally took care to select them from among the twelve ordinary women whom they knew well, in order to keep this confidential situation exempt from the intrigues of the court and capital. Queen Marie Antoinette, who knew Madame Campan when she was reader to the daughters of Louis XV, and wished to have her as first woman, made her a promise of that place; but for several years she filled the situation of ordinary woman. A lady of noble family, much beloved by the Queen, who distinguished her, upon her arrival in France, from among her women, and who flattered herself with the hopes of becoming first woman, was disappointed of the place, in consequence of her imprudence in taking advantage of the kindness of the young dauphiness, who twice paid her debts at the time she was expecting to be appointed first woman. The dauphiness, when she became Queen, assigned as the reason for her refusal, that it was very imprudent to entrust money to persons known to be extravagant and thoughtless, as it exposed the honour of families, as well as the deposit, to danger. The Queen, however, softened down her refusal by placing the lady's children at St. Cyr and the military school, and granting them pensions. At the period of the constitution, when it was proposed to reform the household by abolishing the titles of ladies of honour and gentlemen ushers, and the King determined to introduce the strictest economy into all parts of his own expenses and those of the Queen, it was decided that the daily renewal of the wax candles should be discontinued. The office of first woman was, by this reduction, deprived of its greatest revenue. The King, after consulting with M. de Laporte, fixed the income of the first women at twenty-four thousand livres each, with the addition of the functions and perquisites of the

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tirewomen, whose office was suppressed. He observed, at the same time, that the first women ought to be selected from among persons of merit and good birth, and that their income ought to be sufficient to place them above intrigue or corruption. The plan of the household formed after the constitutional laws was decreed, but the military part was the only one put in execution.

The Queen had twelve women in ordinary: Madame de Malherbe, the wife of the Queen's *maître d'hôtel*, late commissary at war; she died since the Revolution; Madame de Frégals, daughter of M. Emengard de Beauval, Mayor of Compiègne and lieutenant of the hunt, wife of a cavalry captain; she is living at her own estate in Picardy, upon her property; Madame Regnier de Jarjaie (first woman in reversion). Her husband has left the service. They are living at Paris in easy circumstances.

Madame Campan, also first woman in reversion, and reader to the princesses, daughters of Louis XV, had long discharged the duties of first woman only, Madame de Misery, her principal, having retired to her estate of Biache, near Peronne.

Madame Auguié, who fell a victim to the Revolution for lending the Queen twenty-five louis during the two days she passed at the Feuillans. M. Auguié was at that time receiver-general of the finances of the duchy of Lorraine and Bar, and commissioner of the subsistence tax.

Madame Terasse des Mareilles. Her husband has a place under government. Her daughter married the brother of M. Miot, a councillor of state.

Mademoiselle de Marrolles, one of the ladies of St. Cyr. She remains poor, and has retired to her own country, in the neighbourhood of Tours.

Madame Cardon, widow of the Mayor of Arras, has some fortune, and lives upon her estate.

Madame Arcambal. Her husband and father-in-law are in the War Department.

Madame de Gougenot. Her husband, a gentleman and very rich, receiver-general of taxes, and the king's *maître d'hôtel*, died a victim to the Revolution. She lives at Paris in retirement and affluence. She would have been extremely rich if she had had any children.

Madame de Beauvert, wife of a commissary at war, formerly one

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of the King's musketeers, and a Chevalier de St. Louis; she is very poor.

Madame Le Vacher, dead. Her husband is at present receiver of the tolls at Marseilles.

Madame Henri. Her husband is now in the War Office. Her father had a principal charge in the liquidation of the civil list. They have a number of children.

The eight senior women of the Queen each had incomes of three thousand six hundred francs.

The other four had two thousand four hundred livres each.

They each had three hundred livres less when they had lodgings in the castle of Versailles, or apartments assigned to them. When the King went to Compiègne in July, and Fontainebleau in October, three hundred livres a journey were added to their appointments to defray the expenses of moving. It must be observed that these journeys, even if economically performed, cost from a thousand to twelve hundred livres. But the husbands of these ladies had all honourable and lucrative situations, and the emoluments of places of this description were not at all thought of; the support and protection of the Queen were the only consideration which caused them to be canvassed for. I remember when the poorest among the ladies had an income of from fifteen to twenty thousand francs, and some of them, from their husband's circumstances, had from sixty to eighty thousand francs a year; but these fortunes came from financial employments, or places of hereditary property, and were in no way drawn from the royal treasury, the pensions granted being few and inconsiderable.

There was no pension granted to the first women; when they retired, they retained the whole emoluments of their places, which was too considerable to admit of their being indemnified for it. Those who had the places in reversion acted for them, and received a salary of six thousand livres.

The *femmes de chambre* in ordinary were allowed four thousand livres pension, after a series of thirty years; three thousand, after one of twenty-five years; and two thousand, after one of twenty years.

The twelve women served in turns, four every week; two of these every day alternately; so that the four women who had served one week were the next fortnight at leisure, unless a substitute were wanted, and in the week of duty they had intervals of two or three days.

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There was no table appointed for the female service, except when the court left Versailles. The first women had their kitchen and cook. The others had their dinners taken to them in their apartment.

### *Wardrobe Woman: The person named R——*

This woman was entrusted with all matters relating to her place, but as her service lasted all the year round, she was very useful in several particulars of internal domestic service, which would have been otherwise but ill performed by women of the class of those who served the Queen. Her utility, and the kindness of her mistress, had unfortunately made her services but too indispensable. Some particulars relative to the departure for Varennes could not be concealed from her, and it appears clear that she betrayed the Queen's secret to some of the deputies or members of the commune of Paris. She was under the immediate orders of the first *femme de chambre*, who frequently, in case of a vacancy, procured the place for her own *femme de chambre*. When the Queen, on her return from Varennes, dismissed this woman R——, she put the governess of Madame Campan's son in her place.

There were also two bathing women, charged with all that belonged to the baths, who made it their peculiar care. The flowers, vases, porcelain, and all the ornaments of the apartment were arranged every morning by a wardrobe woman, who had no other business.

### *Master of the Wardrobe*

This office, important as it may be about a prince, was but a mere name about a princess, the tirewoman being charged with all that related to his department, and having under her orders a secretary of the wardrobe for correspondence and payment of demands. The income of the master of the wardrobe was, notwithstanding, sixty thousand francs. The office was held by the Comte de la Mortière, who died a general some years ago; and in reversion by M. Poujaud, farmer-general. Its only prerogative was the right of entrance into the chamber.

### *First Valet de Chambre*

The functions of the first *femme de chambre* had in the same manner reduced this office to the mere title, and a right of entrance to the toilet. The salary was forty thousand francs.



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### *Train-Bearer in Ordinary*

This office had daily and assiduous duties attached to it. To hold it, it was necessary to be either noble, the son of an ennobled person, or decorated with the cross of Saint Louis. The first gentleman usher being obliged to receive him into his carriage when attending the court *en suite*, would not otherwise have consented to sit with him. This officer suffered a continual mortification, being obliged by etiquette to give up the Queen's train to her page whenever her Majesty entered the chapel or the inner apartments of the King; so that after having borne the train in the great apartment and the mirror gallery, he gave it up to the page at the entrance to the chapel and the King's apartment. He kept the Queen's mantle or pelisse, but handed them to the first gentleman usher or the first equerry if the Queen wished to make use of them. This practice was called doing the honours of the service, and was always observed by the inferior officer to the superior.

### *Secretaries for Orders: Messieurs Augeard and Beaugeard*

The business of these officers was to get orders for the payment of her household signed by the Queen, which she did punctually every three months at her dressing hour.

These secretaries were also to answer letters of etiquette, such as those from sovereigns upon births, deaths, &c. The Queen merely signed letters of this nature.

The private secretary of the secretaries for orders took every Sunday, from a table in the Queen's room, the whole of the memorials which had been presented to her in the course of the week. He made an abstract of them, and they were sent to the different ministers. Generally, the solicitors got very little by them, unless in some extraordinary cases of hardship; but they were, at all events, sure that the original certificates and family documents, which are often imprudently annexed to memorials and petitions, would be faithfully returned. The Queen took into her private closet all those memorials to which she intended to add postscripts, or which she wished to give to the ministers herself.

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*Superintendent of Finances, Demesnes, and Affairs: M. Bertier, Intendant of Paris*

This office was almost entirely a sinecure.

*Intendant of the Household and Finances: M. Gabriel de Saint-Charles*  
A sinecure.

*Reader: The Abbé de Vermond*

This modest title gives a very inadequate idea of the office and power of the man. Having been the Queen's tutor before her marriage, he retained an absolute power over her mind. He was her private secretary, confidant, and (unfortunately) her adviser.

*Readers: The Comtesse de Neuilly; Madame de La Borde, in reversion*  
A few years ago this lady married M. de Rohan-Chabot; her first husband fell a victim to the Revolution. He was first *valet de chambre* to Louis XV, and brother of the Comtesse d'Angivillers.

The office of female reader was a sinecure under the reign of Marie Antoinette, the Abbé de Vermond objecting to the female readers having the advantage of reading to the Queen. He did not, however, object to the women, or first women, officiating for her. Madame Campan generally had that honour.

*Secretary of the Closet: M. Campan*

He was entrusted with every part of the correspondence which did not belong to the secretaries for orders or the Abbé de Vermond. He enjoyed the confidence of his mistress, and succeeded the Abbé de Vermond, who emigrated on the 17th of July, 1789, until his death in September, 1791. The Queen could not refrain from tears at his death, which was occasioned by the grief experienced by that faithful servant during the sanguinary scenes of the Revolution. His blood underwent a complete revulsion in the night, between the 5th and 6th of October, at Versailles, and the first symptoms of a dropsy in the chest showed themselves the very next day.

M. Campan was, besides, librarian to the Queen from the time of her arrival in France, though she suffered M. Moreau, historiographer of France, to retain the title. She came from Vienna strongly prepossessed against that literary man, whose political character had, in

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truth, suffered during the parliamentary troubles towards the close of the reign of Louis XV. She caused it to be intimated to him that she wished him to give up the keys of her library to M. Campan, but that out of respect to the King's appointment, she left him his title and the salary of his office.

It is to be presumed that the Abbé de Vermond, while fulfilling his duties of tutor at Vienna, was startled at the appointment of a literary character to the situation of librarian to the young dauphiness, the more especially as M. Moreau, elated with his new honour, had printed a work, entitled "Library of Madame the Dauphiness," in which he traced out a course of history and general study for the princess. The Abbé de Vermond, determined to have the sole charge of duties of that kind, planned his fall so skilfully long beforehand, that it took place on his very first step. M. Moreau died lately, at an advanced age, at his estate at Chambourcy, near Saint Germain. His disgrace, at which he was greatly hurt, probably preserved his life and fortune.

### *The Queen had*

Two *valets de chambre* in ordinary;

An usher in ordinary;

(The duty of the offices denominated "ordinary" was to act as substitutes for those who could not perform their quarterly service.)

Four ushers of the chamber, serving by the quarter;

Two ushers of the closet;

Two ushers of the ante-chamber;

Eight *valets de chambre*, per quarter;

Six servants of the chamber, or rather, we may say (in order to convey a more accurate idea of this office), "*valets de chambre* of the sleeping room." These six places about the King and Queen were greatly preferred to those of *valet de chambre*, because they were much more in the inner apartments. Those of the King were raised gradually to eighty thousand francs.

An ordinary valet of the wardrobe;

Two valets of the wardrobe, each serving six months;

A porter of the wardrobe, who carried the taffeta wrappers, clothes, and baskets from the chamber to the tiring wardrobe.

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### *An Ordinary Keeper of the Wardrobe of the Chamber: M. Bonnefoi du Plan*

He was also house steward of Petit Trianon. It was he who designed and executed the press, or rather the kind of *secrétaire* appropriated to the Queen's jewels, and which is at this moment at Saint Cloud. His name, and the year in which that piece of furniture, remarkable for its richness and the paintings with which it is ornamented, was made, are engraved upon a plate of copper, which is at the bottom of it. Boulard, an eminent upholsterer of Paris, was long a servant of the wardrobe under the orders of Bonnefoi.

### *Four Valets de Chambre Upholsterers*

They came to make the bed in the morning and turn it down in the evening.

### *The Queen had*

Two hairdressers attached to her person. They were the brother and cousin of Léonard, the celebrated hairdresser. The latter also held a place as hairdresser, but did not quit Paris, and came only on Sundays at noon to the Queen's toilet. He also came to Versailles on holidays and at balls. He is now at St. Petersburg.

His brother was guillotined at Paris; his cousin died an emigrant. They were very good and faithful servants.

### *Medical Department*

A chief physician: M. Vicq-d'Azyr, after the death of M. de Lassonne;

A physician in ordinary: M. de Lassonne, the son;

A chief surgeon: M. de Chavignac;

A surgeon in ordinary officiating for the household;

Two common surgeons to attend to the livery servants, kitchen servants, and stable servants;

A body apothecary;

A common apothecary;

A well-furnished dispensary, from which the inferior servants received the necessary drugs and remedies. All above the class of footmen, or kitchen servants, thought it beneath them to avail themselves of this right, but they had liberty to do so.



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### *Food Officers*

A chief *maître d'hôtel*: the Marquis de Talaru;

A *maître d'hôtel* in ordinary: M. Chalut de Vérin; M. de Guimps, in reversion.

Messieurs Dufour and Campan the son, in reversion;

Cosson de Guimps;

De Malherbe, in reversion;

Despriez, Moreau d'Olibois, in reversion;

Clément de Ris.

These places required nobility. The *maîtres d'hôtel* officiated for the gentlemen ushers in case the Queen should happen to want them when going in grand procession. Quarterly at Versailles, as well as on journeys, they did the honours of a table to which were admitted the lieutenant and exempt of the guards upon duty, the gentleman usher in ordinary, as well as the one for the quarter, and the Queen's almoner.

The Queen had

One gentleman serving in ordinary,

Twelve gentlemen serving by the quarter;

Their duty was to serve up at the dinners of the King and Queen, and at the *grand couvert*. Notwithstanding the title "gentleman," this place did not require nobility.

### *A Comptroller-General of the Queen's Household: M. Mercier de la Source*

This officer inspected and regulated all the food expenses, being a kind of medium between the Queen's household and the royal treasury; he had power, upon the Queen's mere demand, in case of extraordinary expense, to draw for additional supplies; the Queen availed herself of this privilege but very seldom, and then only for things relative to the arts which she patronised. It was accordingly M. de la Source who fixed the sum granted for the quarto edition of Metastasio; a tribute which the Queen thought due from her to that celebrated author, her old Italian master of the court of Vienna.

Four comptrollers of the food supply serving by the quarter.

A comptroller in ordinary, specially charged with the Queen's table.

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### *Stables*

Chief equerry, the Comte de Tessé.

The Duc de Polignac, in reversion.

Processional equerry, M. de Salvert.

Governor of the pages, M. de Perdreauville.

A preceptor;

An almoner;

And all the masters employed in the education of the King's pages.

Twelve pages.

*Chevalier d'honneur*, the Comte de Saulx Tavannes.

An equerry in ordinary, M. Petit de Vievigne.

Quarterly equeries:

Messieurs de Wallans; de Billy; Chevalier de Vaussay de Beauregard; Comte de Saint-Angel.

### *Chapel*

A grand almoner, the Bishop Duc de Laon.

A first almoner, the Bishop de Meaux.

Almoner in ordinary, the Abbé de Beaupoil de Saint-Aulaire.

Confessor, the Abbé Poupert.

Four quarterly almoners.

An almoner in ordinary.

Four quarterly chaplains.

A chaplain in ordinary.

Chapel boys.

Four quarterly chapel boys.

A chapel boy in ordinary.

Two chapel summoners.

There were besides a great number of offices, especially for the food, such as esquire of the food, chief butler, head of the butlery officers, &c., but they had no opportunity of serving directly about the Queen.

The Queen had twelve footmen.

The Versailles Almanac, and old lists, enumerate all the inferior offices.

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### Particulars of Etiquette

#### *The Queen's manner of living and the arrangement of her time*

When the King slept in the Queen's apartment he always rose before her; the exact hour was communicated to the head *femme de chambre*, who entered, preceded by a servant of the bed-chamber bearing a taper; she crossed the room and unbolted the door which separated the Queen's apartment from that of the King. She there found the first *valet de chambre* for the quarter and a servant of the chamber. They entered, opened the bed curtains on the King's side, and presented to him slippers generally, as well as the dressing-gown of gold or silver stuff, which he put on. The first *valet de chambre* took down a short sword, which was always laid within the railing on the King's side. When the King slept with the Queen this sword was brought upon the arm-chair appropriated to the King, and was placed near the Queen's bed, within the gilt railing which surrounded the bed. The first *femme de chambre* conducted the King to the door, bolted it again, and leaving the Queen's chamber, did not return until the hour appointed by her Majesty the evening before. At night the Queen went to bed before the King; the first *femme de chambre* remained seated at the foot of her bed until the arrival of his Majesty, in order, as in the morning, to see the King's attendants out, and bolt the door after them. The Queen awoke habitually at eight o'clock, and breakfasted at nine, frequently in bed, and sometimes after she had risen, at a small table placed opposite her couch.

In order to describe the Queen's private service intelligibly, it must be recollected that "service" of every kind was "honour," and had not any other denomination. "To do the honours of the service" was to present the service to an officer of superior rank, who happened to arrive at the moment it was about to be performed: thus, supposing the Queen asked for a glass of water, the servant of the chamber handed to the first woman a silver-gilt waiter, upon which were placed a covered goblet and a small decanter; but should the lady of honour come in, the first woman was obliged to present the waiter to her, and if Madame or the Comtesse d'Artois came in at the moment, the waiter went again from the lady of honour into the hands of the princess, before it reached the Queen. It must be observed, however, that if

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a princess of the blood, instead of a princess of the family, entered, the service went directly from the first woman to the princess of the blood, the lady of honour being excused from transferring to any but princesses of the royal family. Nothing was presented directly to the Queen; her handkerchief or her gloves were placed upon a long salver of gold or silver-gilt, which was placed as a piece of furniture of ceremony upon a side-table, and was called "*gantière*." The first woman presented to her in this manner all that she asked for, unless the tire-woman, the lady of honour, or a princess were present, and then the gradation pointed out in the instance of the glass of water, was always observed.

Whether the Queen breakfasted in bed or up, those entitled to the *petites entrées* were equally admitted; this privilege belonged of right to her chief physician, chief surgeon, physician in ordinary, reader, closet secretary, the King's four first *valets de chambre* and their reversioners, and the King's chief physicians and surgeons. There were frequently from ten to twelve persons at this first *entrée*. The lady of honour, or the superintendent, if present, placed the breakfast equipage upon the bed; the *Princesse de Lamballe* frequently performed that office.

As soon as the Queen arose, the wardrobe woman was admitted to take away the pillows and put the bed into a fit state to be made by some of the *valets de chambre*. She withdrew the curtains, and the bed was not generally made until the Queen was gone to Mass. Generally, excepting at Saint Cloud, where the Queen bathed in an apartment below her own, a slipper bath was rolled into her room, and her bathers brought everything that was necessary for the bath. The Queen bathed in a large chemise of English flannel buttoned down to the bottom; its sleeves throughout, as well as the collar, were lined with linen. When she came out of the bath, the first woman held up a cloth to conceal her entirely from the sight of her women, and then threw it over her shoulders. The bathers wrapped her in it, and dried her completely; she then put on a long and wide open chemise, entirely trimmed with lace, and afterwards a white taffeta bed-gown. The wardrobe woman warmed the bed; the slippers were of dimity, trimmed with lace. Thus dressed, the Queen went to bed again, and the bathers and servants of the chamber took away the bathing apparatus. The Queen, replaced in bed, took a book or her tapestry work.



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On her bathing mornings she breakfasted in the bath. The tray was placed on the cover of the bath. These minute details are given here only to do justice to the Queen's scrupulous modesty. Her temperance was equally remarkable; she breakfasted on coffee or chocolate; at dinner ate nothing but white meat, drank water only, and supped on broth, a wing of a fowl, and small biscuits, which she soaked in a glass of water.

The public toilet took place at noon. The toilet table was drawn forward into the middle of the room. This piece of furniture was generally the richest and most ornamented of all in the apartment of the princesses. The Queen used it in the same manner and place for undressing herself in the evening. She went to bed laced in corsets trimmed with ribbon, and sleeves trimmed with lace, and wore a large neckerchief. The Queen's combing-cloth was presented by her first woman, if she was alone at the commencement of the toilet, or, as well as the other articles, by the ladies of honour if they were come. At noon the women who had been in attendance four-and-twenty hours were relieved by two women in full dress; the first woman went also to dress herself. The *grandes entrées* were admitted during the toilet; sofas were placed in circles for the superintendent, the ladies of honour, and tirewomen, and the governess of the children of France when she came there; the duties of the ladies of the bed-chamber having nothing to do with any kind of domestic or private functions, did not begin until the hour of going out to Mass; they waited in the great closet, and entered when the toilet was over. The princes of the blood, captains of the guards, and all great officers having the entry, paid their court at the hour of the toilet. The Queen saluted by nodding her head, or bending her body, or leaning upon her toilet table as if moving to rise; the latter mode of salutation was for the princes of the blood. The King's brothers, also, came very generally to pay their respects to her Majesty while her hair was dressing. In the earlier years of the reign the first part of the dressing was performed in the bed-chamber and according to the laws of etiquette; that is to say, the lady of honour put on the chemise, and poured out the water for the hands; the tirewoman put on the skirt of the gown or full dress, adjusted the neckerchief, and tied on the necklace. But when the young Queen became more seriously devoted to fashion, and the head-dress attained so extravagant a height that it became necessary to put on the chemise from

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below — when, in short, she determined to have her milliner, Made-moiselle Bertin, with her whilst she was dressing, whom the ladies would have refused to admit to any share in the honour of attending on the Queen, — the dressing in the bed-chamber was discontinued, and the Queen leaving her toilet, withdrew into her closet to dress.

On returning into her chamber, the Queen, standing about the middle of it, surrounded by the superintendent, the ladies of honour and tirewomen, her ladies of the bed-chamber, the first gentleman usher, the chief equerry, her clergy ready to attend her to Mass, the princesses of the royal family who happened to come, accompanied by all their attendants, ladies, and tirewomen, passed in order into the gallery, as in going to Mass. The Queen's signatures were generally given at the moment of entry into the chamber. The secretary for orders presented the pen. Presentations of colonels, on taking leave, were usually made at this time. Those of ladies, and such as had a right to the tabouret, or sitting in the royal presence, were made on Sunday evenings, before card-playing began, on their coming in to pay their respects. Ambassadors were introduced to the Queen on Tuesday mornings, accompanied by the attendant of ambassadors on duty, and by M. de Séqueville, the secretary for the ambassadors. The attendant in waiting usually came to the Queen at her toilet to apprise her of the presentations of foreigners which would be made. The usher of the chamber, stationed at the entrance, opened the folding doors to none but the princes and princesses of the royal family, and announced them aloud. Quitting his post, he came forward to name the lady of honour, the persons who came to be presented, or who came to take leave: that lady again named them to the Queen, at the moment they saluted her; if she and the tirewoman were absent, the first woman took the place and did that duty. The ladies of the bed-chamber, chosen solely as companions for the Queen, had no domestic duties to fulfil, however opinion might dignify such offices in a monarchical government. The King's letter in appointing them, among other instructions of etiquette, ran thus: "Having chosen you to bear the Queen company." There were hardly any emoluments accruing from this place, which was purely honorary.

The Queen heard Mass with the King in the tribune, facing the grand altar and the music, with the exception of the days of high ceremony, when their chairs were placed below upon velvet carpets fringed

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with gold. These days were marked by the name of "grand chapel days."

The Queen named the collector beforehand, and informed her of it through her lady of honour, who was besides desired to send the purse to her. The collectors were almost always chosen from among those who had been recently presented. After returning from Mass, the Queen dined every Sunday with the King only, in public, in the cabinet of the nobility, a room which preceded her chamber. Titled ladies, having the honours, sat during the dinner upon sofas placed on each side of the table. Ladies without titles stood round the table; the captain of the guards and the first gentleman of the chamber were behind the King's chair; behind that of the Queen were her first *maître d'hôtel*, her first gentleman usher, and the chief equerry. The Queen's *maître d'hôtel* was furnished with a large staff, six or seven feet in length, ornamented with golden fleurs-de-lis, and surmounted by fleurs-de-lis in the form of a crown. He entered the room with this badge of his office, to announce that the Queen was served. The comptroller put into his hands the menu card; in the absence of the *maître d'hôtel*, he presented it to the Queen himself, otherwise he only did him the honours of the service. The *maître d'hôtel* did not leave his place, he merely gave the orders for serving up and removing; the comptroller and gentlemen serving placed the various dishes upon the table, receiving them from the inferior servants.

The prince nearest to the crown presented water to wash the King's hands at the moment he placed himself at table, and a princess did the same service for the Queen.

The table service was formerly performed for the Queen by the lady of honour and four women in full dress; this part of the women's service was transferred to them on the suppression of the office of maids of honour. The Queen put an end to this etiquette in the first year of her reign. When the dinner was over, the Queen returned, without the King, to her apartment, with her women, and took off her hoop and train.

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### The Queen's Privy Purse

#### *Manner of managing the funds*

The first women served by the month, and gave the accounts of the privy purse to the Queen herself at the end of every month; after having examined them, the Queen wrote at the bottom of the last page, "Approved—Marie Antoinette." Each of the first women carried home her account thus audited, leaving in the office of their apartments in the castle the receipts for the pensions or other matters which she had paid during her month's service. In the same office was a statement of the pensions. It was taken away on the 10th of August, and probably mixed with a number of other things carried to the commune of Paris. The Assembly having decreed that charitable pensions should be continued, and not finding the statement of them, passed another decree authorising the pensioners to demand certificates from the officers or sub-officers of the Queen's chambers; as there was no longer in France either superintendent or lady of honour, the first *femmes de chambre* were, after the reduction, authorised to give these certificates. The supply of the privy purse was handed over on the first of every month to the Queen. M. Randon de la Tour presented her this sum at noon, the hour of her toilet; it was always in gold, and contained in a white leather purse lined with taffeta and embroidered with silver. The funds of the privy purse amounted to three hundred thousand livres; the monthly divisions of them were not equal; the January purse was the richest; those which corresponded in point of time with the fairs of Saint Germain and Saint Laurent were also richer than the others. This was an ancient etiquette, arising from a custom, which was formerly in use, for the Kings to present the Queens with money to enable them to make purchases at the fairs. This sum of three hundred thousand livres was merely play money for the Queen, or for acts of beneficence, or any presents she might be desirous of making. Her toilet was furnished from other sources, even to her rouge and gloves. The Queen retained all the old pensioners of Marie Leczinska, the wife of Louis XV. She paid out of her three hundred thousand livres, to the amount of eighty thousand livres annually, in pensions or alms, and saved out of the rest. Every month the first woman put away two or three hundred louis which had not



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been spent, in a strong chest in the Queen's inner closet. Out of these savings the Queen, in the course of several years, paid for a pair of earrings formed of pear-shaped diamonds of equal size, and a single diamond, which she bought of Bœhmer, the jeweller, in 1774. They were not completely paid for until 1780. Having seen that the young Queen took so much time to discharge, out of her savings, a debt she had contracted for an article which had tempted her, and which she did not like to make the public money pay for, Bœhmer ought never to have lent himself to the belief that eight or ten years afterward she would, without the King's knowledge, have purchased an ornament at fifteen hundred thousand livres. But the desire to dispose of so expensive an article as the famous necklace, the history of which is so generally, and at the same time so imperfectly known, and the hope of being paid in some way or other, induced him to believe that which he ought not to have thought even probable. The Queen had more than one hundred and ten thousand livres in gold in her apartment at the Tuileries a few days before the 10th of August. Deceived by an artful fellow who called himself the friend of Pétion, and who promised to interest him for the King in case of any attack upon the Tuileries, she preserved but fifteen hundred louis in gold, which were carried to the Assembly on the taking of the Tuileries. She had changed eighty and some odd thousands into assignats to make up a sum of one hundred thousand francs, which was to be remitted to the mayor. It was agreed that Pétion should make a private signal on seeing the King on the 9th of August; but he did not make it, and this circumstance, and still more his conduct on the disastrous 10th, produced a conviction that the mediator was nothing more than a mere thief.

The Queen's privy purse being thus prudently administered, and having always exceeded her wants, and as she had even made some investments of money, it is not difficult to give credit to an important truth, namely, that she never drew any extraordinary sum from the public treasury. She was, however, unjustly accused of having done so, in all the provinces, and even in Paris, where people most distinguished for rank and education adopt and promulgate opinions unfavourable to the great, with unaccountable levity.



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AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS  
COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY THE EDITORS

*Note I, page 30.*

“THE Duc d’Aiguillon, grand-nephew of Cardinal de Richelieu, was the dauphin’s intimate friend ; and that which the prince, on account of the discretion necessary in the heir to the crown, could only contemplate, the duke executed. Choiseul, on the other hand, born in Lorraine, and the son of an ambassador of the husband of Maria Theresa, a foreigner in France, a subject and relative of the Emperor, was wholly devoted to the interests of the court of Vienna, and strong in the power of Madame de Pompadour, whom the Empress had intoxicated with pride and vanity, by calling her cousin and making her suitable presents; he was supported by all the influence of the parliaments, of which he called himself the ‘protector,’ and was the declared enemy of the Jesuits ever since he had manifested his hatred to their general at Rome.<sup>1</sup>

“These circumstances and his extraordinary vanity rendered him careless as to making his court to the dauphin, who held opinions diametrically opposite to his own, respecting the King’s authority over the parliaments and the policy of France with respect to the House of Austria. Bold and vain, yet reflecting and profound, with a great deal of consistency and perseverance in his schemes, he possessed all the requisite qualities for becoming with impunity the primary agent of the court of Vienna in France, at a time when the King appeared subdued by fear; for confirming the alliance of 1756, driving the Abbé de Bernis from an administration in which he had not done enough for the court of Vienna, and destroying, no matter by what means, every obstacle raised against his plans.<sup>2</sup> Born to a fortune below mediocrity,

<sup>1</sup> [See the Introduction.]

<sup>2</sup> [This is unjust to Choiseul. De Bernis was disgraced in December, 1758, because he, though largely responsible for the alliance with Austria (1756-57) and for the war with Prussia, had shown signal weakness in fulfilling the treaty obligations, and incompetence in the conduct of the war. Besides, he had annoyed Louis XV by his peace-at-any-price talk, and his fretful requests for retirement. Choiseul had not intrigued for his overthrow, though probably La Pompadour had. Such are the conclusions of M. Waddington, *La Guerre de Sept Ans*, vol. ii, pp. 468-475.]

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and having but little to lose, his system presented to him the prospect of that pomp and power which we have since seen him attain. To gain and to secure them, he had, in the legation from Vienna, in Madame de Gramont, his sister, a politic and intrepid woman, and in the King's favourite mistress, a council amply provided with powerful means of promoting his objects.

"The Duc d'Aiguillon, his enemy, held very different principles. Constantly supported in secret by the dauphin in all his opposition to the new policy, inheriting all the principles of his great-uncle Richelieu, who established despotism in France, and was the founder of the hatred of the Bourbons against the House of Austria, he was incapable of conducting the business of the State otherwise than by following the system of a military government: as a friend of the dauphin, he daily but secretly lamented with him over the Austrian alliance; he loved the Jesuits, and was the secret foe of the parliaments, which showed a strong inclination in favour of liberty. He detested the new philosophers, and formed a powerful party against them, at the head of the Jesuits of St. Sulpice, and the bigots of the court. The Choiseul party had everything to fear, while the Aiguillon party had everything to hope, from a new reign, and the accession of the dauphin to the crown. Such were the two characters, and the two opposite systems of government by which France was agitated towards the close of the reign of Louis XV.

"On the one hand the Duc de Choiseul, with his Austrian alliance, his Jansenists, parliaments, and philosophers, attacks the Jesuits within, and sacrifices the glory and preponderance of France without, to the interests and vanity of the House of Austria. On the other hand the Duc d'Aiguillon, siding with the Jesuits, either to save them from falling or to set them up again after their fall, labours with them to ruin the parliaments and establish absolute authority. While forging fetters for the nation, d'Aiguillon was desirous to free the second-rate powers in friendship with France from the thralldom in which they were held by the monstrous union of the three great powers — France, Russia, and Austria. The Duc de Choiseul, in forming that union, was preparing for the subjection of Poland, Prussia, and Turkey at some distant period.<sup>1</sup> So that the Duc de Choiseul, by his principles,

<sup>1</sup> [Incorrect. Bernis, not Choiseul, negotiated the Austrian alliance in 1756-57. At that time there was no thought of attempting anything against Po-



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became the tyrant of the inferior powers, frightened as they were by the Grand Alliance, and favoured liberty in the interior of France; while d'Aiguillon sought to relieve the inferior powers and tyrannise over the interior. And thus with Choiseuls, Gramonts, and Pompadours, the Duc de Choiseul annihilated the system of Henri IV, of the Richelieus, Davauxs, Mazarins, of Louis XIV, of the Serviens and Belle-Isles, and even of Cardinal Fleury, who twice made war upon Austria, and took from her, either by force or treaty, the kingdom of Naples and the two Sicilies, Lorraine and Barrois. And thus, on the other hand, d'Aiguillon laboured to strengthen the despotism established by his great-uncle in the interior." (*Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, by Soulavie, vol. i.)

*Note II, page 43.*

"Some time before the ambassador's departure, there happened to me," says the Abbé Georgel, "an adventure which became the source of most important discoveries; and the happy consequences of which rank among the most valuable services rendered by the embassy of Prince Louis de Rohan.

"Returning one evening to the hotel, the porter gave me a note carefully sealed up, and addressed to me. I read as follows: 'Be to-night, between eleven and twelve, at ——' (a particular place upon the ramparts), 'and you will be informed of matters of the very highest importance.' An anonymous note of this tenor, sent so mysteriously, and the unseasonable hour appointed, might have appeared to some altogether dangerous and suspicious. But I was not aware that I had any enemies, and desirous not to have to reproach myself with having missed an opportunity that might never occur again, of promoting the King's service, I determined to attend at the appointed place. But I took some prudential precautions, by placing within a certain distance, where they could not be seen, two persons on whom I could rely, to come to my assistance upon a signal agreed on. I found at the place of meeting a man wrapped in a cloak and masked. He put some papers into my hands, and said, in an under and feigned voice, 'You have gained my confidence; I will therefore contribute to the success of M. the Prince de Rohan's embassy. These papers will inform you of

land or Turkey. D'Aiguillon's weakness was largely responsible for the First Partition of Poland.]

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the very essential services which it is in my power to render you. If you approve of them, come again to-morrow to ——' (another place which he mentioned), 'and bring me a thousand ducats.' On my return to the Hôtel de France, I hastened to examine the papers confided to me. Their contents gave me the most agreeable surprise. I saw that we had it in our power to procure, twice a week, all the discoveries of the secret cabinet of Vienna, which was the best-served cabinet of Europe. This secret cabinet possessed, in the highest degree, the art of deciphering quickly the despatches of ambassadors, and of the courts which corresponded with its court. I was convinced by the deciphering of our own despatches, and those of our court to us—even those that were written in the most complicated and the newest ciphers—that this cabinet had found means to procure the despatches of several European courts, of their envoys and agents, through the infidelity and audacity of the frontier directors and post-masters, bribed for that purpose. In order to convince me of this, I received copies of the despatches of the Comte de Vergennes, our ambassador at Stockholm; of the Marquis de Pons, at Berlin; of some private despatches from the King of Prussia to his secret agents at Vienna and Paris to whom alone he confided the true line of his policy, and of whose mission his avowed envoys were utterly ignorant. This same cabinet had discovered the most secret correspondence of the private policy of Louis XV, a correspondence wholly unknown to his council, and his minister for foreign affairs. The Comte de Broglie, who had succeeded the late Prince de Conti, was the private and most carefully concealed minister of this extraordinary diplomacy. He had for his secretary M. Favier,<sup>1</sup> whose diplomatic works have procured him some reputation, and subsequently M. Dumouriez,<sup>2</sup> a pupil of Favier. The mystery of this policy

<sup>1</sup> [Jean Louis Favier (1720?-1784), a French writer, who, under the Comte de Broglie, was trusted with obscure and dangerous diplomatic missions to England. He was connected in the counter-revolution plot with Dumouriez. He wrote many works on civil law and politics, among them a *Historical and Political Essay upon the Government of Holland*.]

<sup>2</sup> [Charles François Dumouriez (1739-1823), a distinguished French soldier, who, in 1792, became general-in-chief of the army in place of La Fayette. In 1793 he plotted a counter-revolution with Austria. This being discovered, he had to flee from France. He spent the rest of his life in exile, writing many political works and his own Memoirs. He died near Henley-on-Thames.]

For the secret policy of Louis XV, see the Duc de Broglie's work, *Le Secret*

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was not confided to all our ambassadors. Sometimes it was the secretary of the embassy, or any other Frenchman who, travelling under various pretences, was found a proper person to act this part. The Comte de Broglie gave the thread of this labyrinth to such persons alone, whose attachment and discretion he had proved. So marked a confidence, and relations so intimate with the King, who himself paid out of his privy purse for this mysterious duty, could not but flatter those who were thus honoured. The Comte de Broglie, being hostile to the House of Rohan, had taken very good care not to let Prince Louis de Rohan or myself into such a correspondence. His distrust was apparently founded on a correct motive, and I will not blame him for it. Among the papers delivered to me at the nocturnal rendezvous was the deciphered correspondence of the Comte de Broglie with the Comte de Vergennes, our ambassador at Stockholm. Furnished with these documents, and armed with unquestionable proofs of their authenticity, I instantly went posthaste to communicate them to the ambassador. I laid before him the samples of the political magazine from which we might supply ourselves. The prince felt the value of it, especially to himself personally, inasmuch as this important discovery must necessarily efface the unpleasant impressions which the Duc d'Aiguillon had not failed to make upon the King's mind, by representing to him that Prince Louis, too light and too much taken up with the pursuits of pleasure, was not so watchful at Vienna as the good of the service required. This event restored to him all that cheerfulness which the underhand and unremitting persecution of that sullen and malicious minister had deprived him of. He looked upon the new part he was about to play as a certain opening to that high reputation which his conduct and industry merited.

"I met the masked man on the following night. I gave him the thousand ducats: he handed to me other papers of increasing interest, and during my whole stay at Vienna, he kept his word. Our meetings took place twice a week, and always about midnight. The ambassador wisely decided that the occupation arising from this discovery should be confined to him and myself, with an old secretary, whose discretion we knew would stand any trial. The secretary copied for the court the papers of the masked man, to whom we were obliged to return them.

*du Roi.* For the ideas and policy of Favier and Dumouriez, see Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, vol. ii, p. 405.]



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“A courier extraordinary was immediately despatched to Versailles with the first-fruits of the newly discovered treasure. He was ordered not to go to bed on his way, and to carry about his person the special packet of secret despatches to the very end of his journey. The courier was the bearer of two packets; the first was addressed to the King, in an envelope directed to the Prince de Soubise, a minister of state, a friend of Louis XV, and cousin of the ambassador. The Prince de Soubise was to hand it immediately and personally to his Majesty. The King was entreated to transmit his orders, in consequence, through the same channel, which was safe against any imprudence. This first packet contained the proofs of the Comte de Broglie’s mysterious correspondence, authorised by his Majesty. Louis XV was assured that, in transmitting other discoveries to the Duc d’Aiguillon, the strictest precautions had been taken, in order that the minister might have no clue to the private correspondence, the knowledge of which the King had thought proper to conceal from him. The second packet was addressed to the minister direct. It contained copies of the intercepted Prussian despatches, as well as of other private despatches from the Austrian ministry to the imperial ambassador at Paris. In the latter the Comte de Mercy<sup>1</sup> was instructed as to the public and private conduct he should pursue, under such and such circumstances, either with respect to the King, or Madame the Dauphiness, and our administration. A separate letter communicated the manner in which this disclosure was made: this letter informed the minister that I was the indirect agent in it. Our courier returned promptly. It is my duty here to speak the truth, and do complete justice to the Duc d’Aiguillon. The Prince de Soubise informed his cousin that the minister had spoken at the council, in the warmest and most flattering terms, of the importance of this discovery, and the signal service rendered to the State by the ambassador. The official despatch of M. d’Aiguillon, and a letter in his own hand, of which I have the original, are couched in language which seems to efface even the slightest traces of the coolness and dislike till then shown.

“‘I sincerely and feelingly share,’ said he, ‘both in the satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> [François, Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, Austrian Ambassador to Paris, who kept Maria Theresa minutely informed of affairs at her daughter’s court. He was a devoted Royalist, and it was he who suggested and helped on the flight to Varennes. He died in 1794.]



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with which the King acknowledges your service, and the credit which this discovery throws upon your mission.' The ambassador is afterwards recommended to preserve the thread of this secret and important communication at any price; and a *carte blanche* is given to both him and myself, for the sums we should judge useful or necessary for that purpose.

"The King, who had put the Prince de Soubise in possession of the secret of his private policy, confessed to him that our discovery had created terror among the chief agents of the secret administration. The Comte de Broglie, in particular, was very much alarmed at it. He dreaded, from the known disposition of Louis XV, all the consequences which might follow in case the Duc d'Aiguillon should happen to penetrate the veil, to him till then impenetrable. His Majesty reassured him, by informing him of the precautions taken, and the formal order given by him to Prince Louis, to preserve the most inviolable secrecy on this subject. Such an order had in fact been transmitted by the Prince de Soubise, accompanied by the most flattering and honourable testimonies of the King's satisfaction and good-will.

"After this discovery, an extraordinary courier was sent off every fortnight with the new communications, with the same care and precautions as before. The absence and excursions of the ambassador, and even his return home, during a whole year that I remained alone charged with the King's business, neither interrupted nor opposed any obstacle to the departure of couriers thus important. The masked man even seemed to redouble his zeal at every succeeding interview."

*Note III, page 43.*

"To great distrust of his own powers," says the Abbé Georgel, "and a total surrender of will in the affairs of the government of his kingdom, Louis XV added excessive curiosity to know the secret of the intrigues of his court, the reports circulated about Paris, the private lives of his ministers, and their conduct in the concerns of their offices. Besides the lieutenant of police, he had secret agents at Versailles and Paris. Laroche, one of his *valets de chambre*, was the medium of this clandestine inquisition. Jeannet, the inspector of the post, and after him the Baron d'Ogny, went every Sunday to the King, to give him an account of the discoveries they had made by opening letters. These two confidants made extracts for the King, from such letters as they

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thought proper to unseal. The ministers themselves were subjected to this unaccountable inquisition. The danger of such a practice is sufficiently obvious, when we reflect on the possibility of either animosity or personal interest, or in short any private motives interfering with these extracts. Twenty clerks, unknown to the administration, were night and day secretly occupied in intercepting letters and making extracts from them. It was by these means that Louis XV discovered the correspondence of the Comte d'Argenson<sup>1</sup> with one of his favourite mistresses, in which that minister, so much distinguished by his master, expressed himself with very little reserve or respect, respecting the King's character. His sudden and unexpected disgrace followed very close upon the violation of the letters.

"In accordance with his mistrustful and inquisitive disposition, this monarch had likewise contrived for himself a secret administration in the European courts, absolutely unknown to the minister for foreign affairs. The King, to whom this mystery was a positive enjoyment, was desirous of judging by these means of the conduct of his ministers at the several courts, and comparing their reports with those transmitted to him by his secret administration: the agents and correspondents of this dark policy were paid by the King himself out of his private purse. They were selected by the secret minister, who transacted the business immediately with his Majesty, and vouched to him for the prudence of the persons to whom, through his instrumentality, the King's instructions were entrusted. The thickest veil was spread over this concealed diplomacy. The secret minister attended the King by intricate ways known only to the confidential *valet de chambre* who introduced him, on appointed days and hours.

"For conducting this correspondence, the preference was given either to an ambassador, or to a secretary, when his discretion could be relied on; but if it was thought right to keep the knowledge of it from both of them, measures were taken for sending and keeping near them the instruments of this anti-ministerial league. Thus, during

<sup>1</sup> [Marc Pierre, Comte d'Argenson (1696-1764), was Secretary of War from 1742 to 1757. He was the friend of Voltaire and a liberal patron of letters. The *Encyclopédie* was dedicated to him. He was included in the disgrace of Machault, and exiled to his estate, where he spent the six last years of his life, and was only permitted to visit Paris after the death of Madame de Pompadour.]

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the embassy of the Prince de Rohan, the Comte de Broglie sent the young Comte de Guibert to travel in Germany, who, under various pretences, stayed at Venice for a long period of time.

“Having had opportunities of making inquiries respecting this strange policy of Louis XV, I have been assured by well-informed persons, that it was suggested to him by the old Abbé de Broglie, the uncle of the marshal and the count.”

To these interesting particulars must be added those which the Abbé Soulavie gives of the secret administration of Louis XV, of the espionage over the courts, and the violation of letters. From what we have just read, it will be seen that the Abbé Soulavie was often well informed, and sometimes veracious: the two testimonies support each other.

“The House of Austria succeeded in procuring a knowledge of the contents of our political despatches from the north and south; but Prince Louis de Rohan, our ambassador, availing himself of his influence amongst the ladies, got copies of the confidential letters from the Emperor to the King of Prussia, and of those from the Prince de Kaunitz to the Comte de Mercy, the ambassador of Maria Theresa, at Versailles. The two courts spent immense sums towards the close of the late King’s reign, not to promote their union, but to spy, to sound, and to find out each other especially with relation to the affairs of Poland.

“Prince Louis, since Cardinal de Rohan, succeeded in making important discoveries on that subject. He sent to his court the secret papers relative to the interviews of Frederick and Joseph II at Neisse and Neustadt, having procured by bribery, direct intelligence from his chancery. The Prince de Kaunitz, who had a similar insight himself into our cabinet at Versailles, got at the source of the treachery in his offices, and had one of the clerks drowned in the Danube. Prince Louis, undismayed at this, gained over others in the offices of the Prince de Kaunitz, and even penetrated into the interior apartments of the Empress and her son. He learned that Austria was about to join Russia against the Porte and France, and had the good fortune to prevent the disasters that Austria might have brought on our ally. He also succeeded in intercepting the letters from Kaunitz to the Comte de Mercy, the Austrian ambassador in France; he thereby learned that the court of Vienna had obtained copies of the despatches from



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the Prince de Rohan to the Duc d'Aiguillon. The Comte de Mercy had traitors in his pay at court, about Louis XV, and in the offices of the Duc d'Aiguillon, who preferred the pecuniary rewards of the Prince de Kaunitz to the sentimental satisfaction felt by a good Frenchman in his fidelity.<sup>1</sup> Louis XV indignantly ordered each of his ministers, 'separately,' to give him 'their suspicions' in writing, that he might unmask the Austrian courtier.

"Prince Louis, on his part, procured copies of the correspondence of the Prince de Kaunitz with the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg. The policy of the House of Austria towards Catherine II was again exposed in it. The Comte de Mercy, who was informed of these letters being communicated by Rohan to Louis XV, informed Maria Theresa of it; and Rohan apprised his own court that the Prince de Kaunitz, being on a wrong scent, had taken the precaution to have the locks of his closet changed, confiding the deposit of the most important despatches to none but his secretary. These diplomatic anecdotes demonstrate the mistrust and solicitude of the two courts of Vienna and Versailles, during the administration of the Duc d'Aiguillon, and explain the implacable anger of Marie Antoinette with respect to him, when she was become Queen of France.

"On the 10th of January, 1774, Prince Louis informed the court that the Prince de Kaunitz had succeeded in purchasing the ciphers of his correspondence with the King and with our ambassadors at Constantinople, Stockholm, Danzig, and St. Petersburg. He did more; he proved to Louis XV that the court of Vienna had deciphered copies of all the despatches between the Duc d'Aiguillon and the minister of every court in Europe. To prove this, he sent extracts from copies of letters from the Duc d'Aiguillon to Berlin, Munich, Dresden, and St. Petersburg. He learned that the offices of interception were Liège, Brussels, Frankfort, and Ratisbon; and that the machinery of our ciphers was at that time such that the Austrian decipherers were able, without much difficulty, to write out our despatches. 'From my closet,' said Prince Louis, 'I read all the correspondence of which I

<sup>1</sup> [Some light is thrown on these secret intrigues by the *Correspondance secrète du Comte de Mercy-Argenteau*, edited by Arneth and Flammermont. It is probable that the Count gained some of his secret information through the medium of the French banker Laborde, son-in-law of Madame Nettime, banker of the Imperial Court at Brussels. See *Le Comte Mercy-Argenteau*, by Comte de Pimodan (Paris, 1911).]



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speaking; I learn the secrets that the ministers think proper to withhold from me in the letters they write to me. There it was that I learned, and stated in a private letter delivered to the King by the Prince de Soubise, that the Comte de Broglie had, during his exile, and with his Majesty's sanction, continued his secret correspondence with M. Durance, at St. Petersburg, and with other ministers. To this letter were annexed the ciphers they made use of. Since this information, so fortunately acquired and eagerly communicated to our ministry, I have never ceased to dwell upon the necessity of a change of ciphers; I am still without any sure means for conveying the secret instructions I have to transmit to Constantinople, Stockholm, and St. Petersburg. All the despatches of the Prince de Kaunitz, and all those of foreign princes that are intercepted, pass through what is here called the "cabinet of decipherers." Baron Pichler is at the head of it. He transacts business only with the Empress, and renders accounts of his proceedings to none but herself. Pichler delivers five copies to her—one for the Emperor, one for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the eventual successor to the Austrian monarchy;<sup>1</sup> one is sent to Brussels to Prince Stahremberg, intended to succeed the Prince de Kaunitz, and one to the Comte de Rosenberg, a confidant. Each returns his copy to the Empress with marginal observations; and upon these observations, political projects and resolutions are founded. The Empress has sometimes *additions* or *omissions* made in the intercepted despatches, when she desires that certain counsels or information, which she does not wish to appear to emanate from her, should reach the Emperor.'” (*Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, by Soultavie, vol. iii.)

*Note IV, page 61.*

“This account of the characters of the court discloses the party spirit which the Empress fomented in France. She charged the Comte de Mercy to keep it up; she pointed out, without exception, all the Lorrainers born in a province which was the cradle of her husband, Francis I, and in which the House of Austria carefully preserved a party which never forgot its ancient sovereigns. This was a foundation-stone in the policy of the House of Austria. Attachment, without too posi-

<sup>1</sup> [Leopold became Emperor in 1790, on the decease of Joseph II, but reigned only two years, dying early in 1792.]

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tive engagements, was suitable to the refined policy of a skilful woman who knew how to colour and conceal her sentiments. The Duc de Choiseul is properly at the head of the list; he was the leader of the Lorraine and Austrian party; he first organised it in France. The Montazets were absolutely sold to the party, so that subsequently the Abbé de Montazet became Archbishop of Lyons, through the interest of the Duc de Choiseul, for his Jansenistic opinions, and for the spirit of persecution which he displayed against the Sulpicians and the Jesuit party in general.

"As to the Comte de Broglie, the Empress must have been completely deceived by that skilful politician. He was the director of the famous secret correspondence, which incessantly laboured against the interest of Maria Theresa, by secretly thwarting the Austrian alliance of 1756.

"The Comte de Broglie was not a man to sell his secret and his country. He was even persecuted by the Prince de Kaunitz: the recommendation, then, of the Comte de Broglie, is the result of some of those incomprehensible acts of diplomatists who are skilled in the art of disguising their principles, when they have any, or affecting a great variety of them, according to circumstances. The profound secrecy constantly kept by the agents of the private correspondence, under the Comte de Broglie, induces a belief that he was among the number of the former." (*Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, by Soulavie.)

*Note V, page 63.*

The Abbé Georgel, secretary to the embassy at Vienna, a man of talent, of whom we have before spoken, in page 61 of this volume, thus relates the recall of the cardinal in his Memoirs. His narrative in some respects confirms that of Madame Campan. Nothing illustrates history so well as this accordance between different testimonies.

"On the departure of Prince Louis de Rohan for Compiègne, where the new King held his court, I remained at Vienna, charged with the transaction of the affairs of France with the Austrian ministry. I consequently received instructions to continue the negotiations, as entrusted with the political correspondence with our ministry, and the King's ambassador at Constantinople. Upon his arrival, the Prince de Rohan heard of the complaints of Maria Theresa, and the steps

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already taken in her name by Marie Antoinette for his recall. He had an audience of the King: it was short, and far from satisfactory. Louis XVI listened to him a few minutes, and then abruptly said, 'I will soon let you know my pleasure.'

"He never could obtain an audience of the Queen, and, without deigning to receive him, she sent for the letter which her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, had given him for her. His relations did not conceal from him that the prejudices of the King and Queen against him were very strong. They advised him not to make any attempts to return to Vienna; saying they would be quite thrown away, and would only give more publicity to his disgrace. The new minister for foreign affairs<sup>1</sup> was still at Stockholm, and he who held the office in the interim had not sufficient influence to second any request of Prince Louis to return to Vienna with effect; he therefore remained in this state of perplexity and suspense more than two months, deeming his honour interested in his return to his embassy. He felt himself called upon to write a letter to the King, in which he described his situation, in terms calculated to interest the monarch's justice and feelings. His letter remained unanswered; but Louis XVI told the Comtesse de Marsan, a cousin of the ambassador, that the embassy to Vienna was intended for a man preferred by the Empress, and selected by the Queen, whom he had been unable to refuse. It was soon understood that the Baron de Breteuil was the person. On receiving this intelligence, Prince Louis could no longer retain any doubt of his complete disgrace, or of the mortifications he would have to endure under the new reign."

*Note VI, page 70.*

"Christopher de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, the ardent apostle of frequent communion, arrived from Paris with the intention of soliciting in public the administration of the sacrament to the King; and secretly retarding it as much as possible. The ceremony could not take place without the 'previous' and 'public expulsion of the concubine,' according to the canons of the Church, and the Jesuitical party, of which Christopher was the leader. This party, which had made use of Madame du Barry to suppress the parliaments, to support the Duc d'Aiguillon, and ruin the Choiseul faction, did not very will-

<sup>1</sup> [Vergennes.]

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ingly consent to disgrace her canonically, after such striking services. The Archbishop of Paris had always said openly, that she had rendered the most signal services to religion.<sup>1</sup> This Molinist party was joined by the Ducs de Richelieu, de Fronsac, d'Aiguillon, Bertin, Maupeou, and Terray. Madame du Barry being their support with the weak and pusillanimous King, they were bound to defend her, and prevent a degradation and retaliation such as the Duchesse de Châteauroux had meditated in a similar case, in 1745.

"The opposite party, the Choiseul, which was active in every direction, sought, on the other hand, to accelerate a religious ceremony which was to annihilate a favourite who had driven their leader, the Duc de Choiseul, from court. It was amusing to see the latter party, which was the scourge of religion in France, calling it in to their aid, during the King's sickness, in order to revenge themselves on Madame du Barry; while the party of the Archbishop and the bigots, in their turn, combined to prevent Louis XV from receiving the sacrament. 'At that time they were coolly jobbing and bargaining about the King's conscience and compunction,' said the Cardinal de Luynes to me.

"There was consequently an absolute uproar at court. The question was, 'whether the King should, or should not, receive the sacrament immediately.' 'Must we,' said the Maréchal de Richelieu, 'must we suffer Madame du Barry to be sent away with ignominy, and can we forget her services, and expose ourselves to her vengeance in case of her return? or rather, shall we await the extremity of the invalid to effect a mere separation, and proceed, without noise or exposure, to a plain administration of the sacrament?' Such was the ferment, and such the state of men's minds at court, when, on the 1st of May, the Archbishop of Paris presented himself, for the first time, to the sick monarch at half-past eleven o'clock in the morning. He had scarcely reached the door of the King's ante-chamber, when the Maréchal de Richelieu went to meet him, and conjured him not to kill the King by a 'theological proposition,'<sup>2</sup> which had killed so many sick persons. 'But if

<sup>1</sup> That the rigid Christopher de Beaumont should have said any such thing, we think very doubtful; for our parts, we do not believe a word of it. *Note by the Editor.*

<sup>2</sup> The truth of these particulars is confirmed by Besenval's *Memoirs*, vol. i. *Note by the Editor.*



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you are curious to hear some pretty little elegant sins,' said he to the prelate, 'place yourself there, Monsieur Archbishop, and I will confess, and teach you such as you have not heard since you became Archbishop of Paris. If, however, you will absolutely confess the King, and repeat here the scenes of the Bishop of Soissons, at Metz; if you will send away Madame du Barry with disgrace, reflect on the consequences and your own interests. You complete the triumph of the Duc de Choiseul, your inveterate enemy, from whom Madame du Barry has contributed so much to deliver you, and you persecute your friend for the benefit of your foe. Yes, sir; I repeat it, your friend; and so much is she your friend, that she said to me yesterday, "Let the archbishop leave us alone; he shall have his cardinal's cap; I take it upon myself, and will answer for it."'

"The Archbishop of Paris readily understood that this business of the sacrament would meet with considerable opposition. He went into the King's bed-chamber, and found there Madame Adelaide, the Duc d'Aumont, the Bishop of Senlis, and the Maréchal Richelieu, in whose presence the archbishop resolved not to say one word about confession, for that day. This circumspection so pleased Louis XV, that on the archbishop withdrawing, he had Madame du Barry called in, and kissed her beautiful hands again with his wonted affection.

"On the 2d of May the King found himself a little better. Madame du Barry had brought him two confidential physicians, Lorry and Bordeu, who were enjoined to conceal the nature of his sickness from him, and remain silent as to his real situation, in order to keep off the priests and save her from a humiliating dismissal. The King's improvement allowed Madame du Barry to resume her free manners with him, and to divert him by her usual playfulness and conversation. But La Martinière, who was of the Choiseul party, and to whom they durst not refuse his right of entry, and who felt offended at the confidence placed in Lorry and Bordeu, did not conceal from the King either the nature or the danger of his sickness. He answered his questions as to the nature of the pustules, which multiplied all over him in a frightful manner: 'Sire, these pimples are three days in forming, three in suppurating, and three in drying.' The King, who had not forgotten that he had had smallpox, being convinced of the malignancy of the sickness, sent for Madame du Barry, and said to her, 'My love, I have got smallpox, and my illness is very dangerous on

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account of my age and other disorders. I ought not to forget that I am the *most Christian King, and the eldest son of the Church*. I am sixty-four; the time is perhaps approaching when we must separate. I wish to prevent a scene like that of Metz.<sup>1</sup> Apprise the Duc d'Aiguillon of what I say to you, that he may arrange with you, if my sickness grows worse; so that we may part without any publicity.'

"The Jansenists and the Duc de Choiseul's party triumphed in the archbishop's failure. They publicly said, that M. d'Aiguillon and the Archbishop of Paris had resolved to let the King die without receiving the sacrament, rather than disturb Madame du Barry. Annoyed by their remarks, Beaumont determined to go to Versailles and reside in his house of the Lazaristes to deceive the public, avail himself of the King's last moments, and sacrifice Madame du Barry, when the monarch's condition should become desperate. He arrived at Versailles on the 3d of May, but did not see the King. The prelate was no longer impelled by that impetuosity of zeal which we have known him to possess, nor had he his old affectation of contempt for all politeness, and the common observances of good society, when called upon to fulfil his duty. He had no other object than under existing circumstances to humble the enemies of his party, and to support the favourite who had assisted it to overcome them, to the utmost.

"A contrary zeal animated the Bishop of Carcassonne, who was at daggers drawn with the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon. The complaisant spirit of the latter had elevated him to his dignities and to his places at court. Less of the Christian than the courtier, he thought, with the Richelieus and the mistress, that the monarch ought not to be terrified by any remarks relative to the administration of the sacraments. He said, with them, that the mere mention of the sacraments might make a very dangerous impression upon the King's mind. The Bishop of Carcassonne (a second FitzJames, Bishop of Soissons, who acted the same part at Metz), on the contrary, urged 'that the King ought to receive the sacrament; and by expelling the concubine, to give an example of repentance to France and Christian Europe, which he had scandalised.'

<sup>1</sup> [This refers to the King's illness at Metz during the War of the Austrian Succession, when his mistress, the Duchesse de Châteauroux, was dismissed.]

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“‘By what right,’ said the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon, ‘do you instruct me?’ ‘There is my authority,’ replied the Bishop of Carcassonne, holding up his pectoral cross. ‘Learn, Monseigneur, to respect this authority, and do not suffer your King to die without the sacraments of the Church, of which he, the most Christian King, is the eldest son.’ Amidst this confusion, the disgraceful scenes of Metz were about to be renewed, when the Duc d’Aiguillon and the Archbishop of Paris, who witnessed the discussion, thought fit to put an end to it. D’Aiguillon went to receive the King’s orders relative to Madame du Barry. ‘She must be taken quietly to your seat at Ruelle,’ said the King; ‘I shall be grateful for the care Madame d’Aiguillon may take of her.’

“Madame du Barry saw the King again for a moment on the evening of the 4th, and promised to return to court upon his recovery. Madame d’Aiguillon took her, with Mademoiselle du Barry and Madame de Serre, in her carriage to Ruelle, to wait the event. She was scarcely gone when the King asked for her. ‘She is gone,’ was the answer. From that moment the disorder gained ground; he thought himself a dead man, without the possibility of recovery.

“The 5th and 6th passed without a word of confession, viaticum, or extreme unction. The Duc de Fronsac threatened to throw the curate of Versailles out of the window if he dared to utter them. It is from himself I have the story. But on the 7th, at three in the morning, the King *imperatively* called for the Abbé Maudoux. Confession lasted seventeen minutes. The Ducs de la Vrillière and d’Aiguillon wished to delay the viaticum; but La Martinière, to complete the expulsion of Madame du Barry, said to the King, ‘Sire, I have seen your Majesty in very trying circumstances, but never admired you so much as I have done to-day. No doubt your Majesty will immediately finish what you have so well begun.’ The King had his confessor Maudoux called back: this was a poor priest, who had been placed about him some years before, because he was old and blind. He gave him absolution.

“As to the formal renunciation desired by the Choiseul party in order to humble and annihilate Madame du Barry with solemnity, it was no more mentioned. The grand almoner, in concert with the archbishop, composed a formula, which was thus proclaimed in presence of the viaticum: ‘Although the King owes an account of his



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conduct to none but God alone, he declares his repentance at having scandalised his subjects, and is desirous to live solely for the maintenance of religion and the happiness of his people.' Descents and openings of the shrine of Saint Geneviève were afterwards multiplied to obtain his recovery.

"On the 8th and 9th the disorder grew worse; and the King beheld the whole surface of his body coming off piecemeal and corrupted. Deserted by his friends, and by that crowd of courtiers which had so long crawled before him, the only consolation presented to him was the piety of his daughters."<sup>1</sup> (*Historical and Political Memoirs*, by Soulavie, vol. i.)

*Note VII, page 73.*

"When the Duc de Choiseul's exclusion from administration was determined on, nothing remained but to choose among the three candidates who were dear to the late dauphin, and to the children of Louis XV, especially as they had been exiled through the intrigues of Madame de Pompadour, who was so much detested by the royal family. The dauphin had recommended them to his successor. The three ministers were the Cardinal de Bernis, M. de Maurepas, and M. de Machault. The cardinal was at once set aside, although proposed by Madame Adelaide, who, however, observed that the cardinal might have had, in the first treaty of 1756, with Austria, a claim to form a party with the Queen.

"M. de Machault being found more impartial upon the question relative to foreign policy, Louis XVI decided in his favour. He did so the rather because M. de Machault had the very highest reputation for strict probity. Under these circumstances he wrote the former Keeper of the Seals a letter of invitation, in which he depicts the timid and hesitating character of his mind. He tells him that he shares the grief of all France upon the death of Louis XV, whereas all France heard the news of it with ecstasy. He observes that he has high duties

<sup>1</sup> These notes relative to the last sickness of Louis XV were furnished to me by M. de La Borde, his first *valet de chambre*, who has left some valuable memoirs of the court of Louis XV; by the Abbé Dupinet, canon of Notre Dame, who had them from the Archbishop of Paris; by the Cardinal du Luynes, Madame d'Aiguillon, the Duc de Fronsac, and the Maréchal Richelieu. I have had recourse to both parties for the account of the intrigues by which the expiring King was tormented. *Note by Soulavie.*



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to fulfil, that he is deficient in the knowledge necessary for governing, and he invokes the probity and talents of M. de Machault.

“The Abbé de Radonvilliers, hovering about the young King under these circumstances, in order to put in a word to suit his own ends, alarmed at the idea of the return of the inflexible and severe Machault, the enemy of the priesthood, remarked to Madame Adelaide that the principles of the old minister were very rigid and very Jansenistical, and that he would be quite misplaced in a court, the character of which had changed very much during the latter years of Louis XV. He added, that violent and terrible measures must be expected if he returned, because he had grown rusty in his exile, while M. de Maurepas had, during his, preserved the ease, grace, and wit of a Frenchman. He also remarked, that the King’s letter recalling M. de Machault would do equally well for M. de Maurepas, and proposed to request the King merely to change the envelope.

“The ex-Jesuit Radonvilliers had a motive which he kept to himself. The Jesuits and Sulpicians could not endure M. de Machault, since, by the edict of 1748, he proscribed all donations of funded property to the clergy in France. Maurepas, on the contrary, was the friend of M. d’Aiguillon, devoted to the Jesuits and detested by the parliaments. The young King, yielding to these observations, suffered the letter signed in favour of M. de Machault to be addressed to M. de Maurepas. Radonvilliers and d’Aiguillon, without being aware of it, prepared the downfall of the State. M. de Maurepas was much beneath his place in all affairs relative to the preservation of a great empire. M. de Machault, on the other hand, was a deep and reflecting man, capable of preserving it as the empires of Russia, Turkey, England, and Austria have been preserved. Machault had an anticipating mind, but Maurepas never appeared to care for the existence of the State beyond the duration of his own life. The Abbé de Radonvilliers, observing that the Duc d’Aiguillon was the last and only partisan the Jesuits had left in the cabinet of Versailles, imagined that M. de Maurepas, the duke’s uncle, would keep him there. The *esprit de corps* at this conjuncture favoured the most contemptible of the three candidates, and M. de Maurepas, who had neither genius, decision of character, nor views sufficiently elevated for a prime minister, was preferred.” (*Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, by Soulavie, vol. ii.)

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*Note VIII, page 77.*

"A list of several persons recommended by the dauphin to such one of his children as shall succeed Louis XV; entrusted to the care of M.M. de Nicolai, with many other papers.

"*M. de Maurepas* is an old minister, who has preserved, as far as I can learn, his attachment to the true principles of policy, which *Madame de Pompadour* mistook and betrayed.

"*The Duc d'Aiguillon* belongs to a house which rendered itself illustrious by a political system, which France will sooner or later be compelled for its safety to adopt again. He will be matured by age, and will be useful in many respects. His principles upon the subject of the royal authority are as pure as those of his family, which have been without a flaw from the time of the Cardinal de Richelieu.

"My father has sent out of the way a man of unbending temper and some errors of judgment, but a man of worth, *M. de Machault*. The clergy detest him for his severities towards them; time has greatly moderated him.

"*M. de Trudaine* enjoys a high reputation for probity and attachment, combined with great acquirements.

"*The Cardinal de Bernis* is at length rewarded for the services he has rendered the House of Austria. But his political system, with relation to that power, was conceived with more moderation than that of the Duc de Choiseul. He was sent away because he did not do enough for the Empress, and remembered that he was a Frenchman.<sup>1</sup> If he moderates his well-known resentment against the powerful party of the clergy, who are much attached to our house, he may become very useful.

"*M. de Nivernois* has quickness, and is a man of polished manners; he may be sent on embassies where these qualities are indispensable. It is in that way he must be employed.

"*M. de Castries* is fit for military matters; he is honourable and well informed.

"*M. du Muy* is virtue personified. He inherits all the good qualities possessed by *M. de Montausier*, as I understand from report. He will be found steadfast in virtue and honour.

"*Messieurs de Saint-Priest* rose through *Madame de Pompadour*,

<sup>1</sup> [M. Waddington, in his *Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans*, has proved that Choiseul was much less pro-Austrian than de Bernis, whose dismissal in December, 1758, was due to softness and general incompetence.]

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but they have capacity and aspiring dispositions. A distinction should be carefully made between the father, on the one hand, and the son and the chevalier, on the other. The chevalier may one day become very useful.

“*The Comte de Perigord* is a prudent and worthy man.

“*The Comte de Broglie* possesses activity and talent, and is capable of forming political combinations.

“*The Maréchal de Broglie* is qualified to command in war.

“*The Comte d’Estaing* is equal to his station.

“The information of *M. de Bourcet* may be relied on. The same of *Baron d’Espagnac*.

“*M. de Vergennes* is fit for embassies; he has a well-ordered mind, is wise, and is capable of carrying on a protracted affair on good principles.

“There are in the parliament, in the families of the president, men very much attached to their duties; there are also some among the councillors.

“*M. the president Ogier* is of a fit temperament for stormy and difficult negotiations; but there are among the magistracy some violent spirits, and men guided by others, who are unfit to be employed elsewhere than in parliament, on account of their restlessness.

“As to the clergy, *M. de Jarente* has introduced into that body many persons who deserve to remain unknown. He has taken the course directly contrary to that adopted by his predecessor, who wished to have an exemplary clergy, a clergy interested in the cause of religion. *M. de Jarente* chooses persons too much like himself.

“The Bishop of Verdun is too well known to need recommendation; the same may be said of all his family, the attachment of which is undeniable.

“*The Duc de la Vauguyon* is equally too well known to require recommendation. He had it too much at heart to render his pupils polished, enlightened, and able princes, ever to be forgotten. I can say the same in favour of the persons entrusted with the education of the children of France.

“As for *M. the old Bishop of Limoges*, his virtue, candour, and delicacy speak for themselves.

“There are other persons very worthy of recommendation; but, besides that they are in office, they are connected either by friendship

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or relationship with those above-mentioned. I shall therefore not speak of them.

“The Archbishop of Paris (de Beaumont) is to be looked upon as one of the pillars of religion, whom the family is bound both in conscience and for its own sake to maintain, *cost what it will*. The affectionate mother of my children will say more about it. She knows well how to distinguish between good and evil, and it is not necessary here to demonstrate how worthy she is of the tenderest attention.” (Soulavie’s *Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. i.)

*Note IX, page 94.*

“Before the time of Francis Stephen the imperial court of Germany was the most magnificent and the most pompous of all Europe. Nowhere was what is called etiquette observed more rigorously, or more scrupulously. Francis suffered it to continue in high ceremonies, but banished it from the privacy of the court. The Empress Queen readily acceded to this alteration, which accorded perfectly well with her natural benevolence. They substituted, therefore, for the ancient etiquette the ease and even the familiarity which they had so successfully indulged in at Lunéville. They lived in the midst of those who came about them, just as private individuals live among their equals. Except on days of ceremony, their table was frugal, and they received at it persons of merit, of both sexes, without distinction of birth. In their amusements they carefully discarded all restraint; and their dress in no way distinguished them from those who shared in the diversions. In short, they both received with truly winning affability all who had to approach them. Their mode of reception was even more prepossessing towards the humble than towards the great, towards the poor man than the rich.

“It is impossible to help envying the happiness of sovereigns who can descend to such familiarity with impunity; for it must be delightful occasionally to forget the burden of royalty, and taste the pleasures of private life. But Marie Antoinette deceived herself in thinking that she also could open her heart to those delicious emotions which are never felt by those who keep themselves at too great a distance from the rest of mankind. She did not know the disposition of our nation, which, as La Bruyère says, requires seriousness and severity in its



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masters; and by the time she had learned that truth, the lesson came too late." (*History of Marie Antoinette Joséphe Jeanne de Lorraine, Archduchess of Austria, Queen of France*, by Montjoie.)

*Note X, page 103.*

"A few days before the dauphin's marriage it was reported that Mademoiselle de Lorraine, daughter of the Comtesse de Brionne, and sister of the Prince de Lambesc, grand *écuyer* of France, was to dance her minuet at the dress ball immediately after the princes and princesses of the blood, and that the King had granted her that distinction just after an audience which his Majesty had given to the Comte de Mercy, the ambassador of the Emperor and Empress. Although the etiquette and forms of a dress ball are by no means the object of these pages, it must not be supposed that they are quite unproductive of matter to the philosophic mind; besides, it is always interesting to remark whatever characterises the spirit of a court, a nation, or an age. The intelligence about Mademoiselle de Lorraine's minuet caused the greatest fermentation among the dukes and peers, who upon this occasion enlisted all the superior nobility of the kingdom in their cause. They set it down for an incontrovertible principle that there could not be any intermediate rank between the princes of the blood and the superior nobility, and that, consequently, Mademoiselle de Lorraine could have no rank distinct from that of the women of quality presented at court.

"The Archbishop of Rheims, the first ecclesiastical peer, being unwell, they met at the house of the Bishop of Noyon, the second ecclesiastical peer, brother of the Maréchal de Broglie. They drew up a memorial to be presented to the King: the dukes and peers, in signing it, left intervals between their signatures, that the superior nobility might sign without any particular order, and without distinction of title or rank. The Bishop of Noyon presented this memorial about the minuet to his Majesty.

"The request was hardly known when the following parody on it was publicly circulated:

"Sire, the Great, one and all  
See with sorrow and pain  
A princess of Lorraine  
Take the lead at the ball.

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*If your Majesty mean  
Such affronts to protect,  
Such marked disrespect,  
They will quit the gay scene,  
And leave fiddlers and all:  
Then think what is said,  
The agreement is made,  
Signed Bishop of Noyon,  
De Villette, Beaufremont, &c.'*

"In fact, it was openly said that if the King's answer were unfavourable, all the women of quality would find themselves suddenly indisposed, and not one of them would dance at the ball. This versified petition is not without point in other respects. Independent of the absurdity of a prelate presiding over deliberations, and guiding the measures and struggles of the French nobility, upon the subject of a minuet, the names of some ancient and illustrious houses are enclosed in it, between two grantees of the monarchy of very recent date. This may be taken for a joke, but it is a certain fact; and it is a positive truth that the Marquis de Villette, the son of a treasurer of war extraordinary, who never distinguished himself, down to the present time, further than by a few trifling compositions, and some tolerably glaring slips of youth, was permitted to sign a petition, at the bottom of which we read the names of Beaufremont, Clermont, and Montmorency. No doubt his descendants will be grateful to him for this signature. They will say, 'One of our ancestors signed the famous minuet-petition on the marriage of the grandson of Louis XV, in concert with all the peers, and all the superior nobility of the kingdom; so that our name was thenceforward classed among the most illustrious in the kingdom.' They may also say, 'In 1770, at the dress ball on the marriage of the dauphin, a Villette disputed the point of precedence with the princes of the House of Lorraine.' 'It was the great Villette,' one of his grandsons will add, 'who published, at his own expense, an eulogium upon Charles V and one upon Henri IV, which have not escaped the attacks of time either in the archives of literature, or in those of our house;' and they will say the truth. There are plenty of historical proofs, which rest on no better foundation." (Grimm: *Correspondance*, tome 7, page 143.)

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The following are particulars added by Soulavie to those we have just read:

“Maria Theresa knew the court of Versailles well; and yet she so far erred as to demand diplomatically, through M. de Mercy, her ambassador, that Mademoiselle de Lorraine, her relation, and the Prince de Lambesc should rank next after the princes of the blood, in the entertainments on the marriage of her daughter with the dauphin of France.

“Louis XV, in order to gratify the dauphiness, who desired it, and Maria Theresa, who demanded it, thought fit to make it an affair of state. He knew the jealousy of the *grande*es of his court, with relation to their rights of etiquette, and he desired them, by virtue of the submission and attachment which they owed him, and which they had manifested to him, as well as to his predecessors, not to contradict him on this occasion. He signified his desire to mark his gratitude to the Empress for the present she made to France of her daughter; he had recourse to the language of friendship, and worked on the feelings on that occasion, to obtain this condescension from the *grande*es of the State.

“The docility of the nobles to Louis XV had altered for some years, and the King did not calculate on the obstacles the dukes would throw in the way of this new assumption. The ladies of the court, from whom Louis XV had a right to expect the most submission and deference, played an obstinate and haughty part, opposing an insurmountable resistance to the King’s request that Mademoiselle de Lorraine might be suffered to dance immediately after the princesses of the blood; they were firm in their resolution to deprive themselves of the pleasure of the ball, rather than suffer their right to dance first to be infringed upon. Among all these ladies, Madame de Bouillon distinguished herself most by the asperity of her refusals and observations. Louis XV showed himself so much offended at them, that she came no more to court. The dauphiness, on her part, was so vexed, that she procured one of the letters that Louis XV had written to the peers, and shut it up in her desk, saying, ‘I will remember it.’ However, in order to put an end to the matter, Mademoiselle de Lorraine agreed to dance with the Duchesse de Duras, whose situation kept her at court. This middle course moderated all the disagreeable concomitants of the affair, and, among the rest, the bustle occasioned by the retreat, and the return to Paris of the titled ladies who had refused to dance at the wedding of

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the young princess." (Soulavie's *Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. i.)

*Note XI, page 106.*

"The dresses worn by the principal dignitaries at the consecration were, on account both of their richness and their ancient form, among the most interesting objects of that solemnity. The lay peers were clad in vests of gold stuff, which came down as far as the mid leg; they had girdles of gold, silver, and violet-coloured silk mixed, and over the long vest a ducal mantle of violet cloth, lined and edged with ermine; the round collar was likewise of ermine; and everyone wore a crown upon a cap of violet satin, and the collar of the Order of the Holy Ghost over the mantle.

"The captain of the hundred Swiss of the King's guard was dressed in silver stuff, with an embroidered shoulder-belt of the same; a black mantle lined with cloth of silver, and, as well as his trunk hose, trimmed with lace, and a black cap surmounted with a plume of feathers. The Grand Master and the Master of the Ceremonies were dressed in silver stuff doublets, black velvet breeches intersected by bands, and cloaks of black velvet, trimmed with silver lace, with caps of black velvet surmounted with white feathers.

"Everything being arranged for giving suitable pomp and splendour to the consecration, on Sunday the 11th of June, as early as six in the morning, the canons in their copes arrived in the choir, and placed themselves in the upper stalls. They were soon followed by the Archbishop Duke of Rheims, the cardinals and prelates invited, the ministers, the marshals of France, the councillors of state, and the deputies of the various companies: everyone took the place appointed for him, without any confusion.

"About half-past six the lay peers arrived from the archiepiscopal palace. Monsieur represented the Duke of Burgundy; M. the Count d'Artois, the Duke of Normandy; and the Duke of Orléans represented the Duke of Aquitaine. The remainder of the ancient peers of France, the Counts of Toulouse, Flanders, and Champagne, were represented by the Duke of Chartres, the Prince of Condé, and the Duke of Bourbon, who wore counts' coronets.

"The ecclesiastical peers continued hooded and mitred during the whole ceremony.



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“At seven the Bishop Duke of Laon, and the Bishop Count of Beauvais set out to fetch the King. These two prelates, in their pontifical dresses, with their reliquaries suspended from their necks, were preceded by all the canons of the church of Rheims, among whom were the musicians. The chanter and sub-chanter walked after the clergy and before the Marquis de Dreux, grand master of the ceremonies, who immediately preceded the Bishop Duke of Laon and the Bishop Count of Beauvais; they passed through a covered gallery, and came to the King’s door, which, according to custom from time immemorial, they found shut. The chanter strikes upon it with his baton; and the great chamberlain, without opening, says to him, ‘What is it you require?’ ‘We ask for the King,’ replies the principal ecclesiastical peer. ‘The King sleeps,’ returns the great chamberlain. Then the grand chanter strikes again; the bishop asks for the King, and the same answer is given. At length, the chanter having struck a third time, and the great chamberlain having answered, ‘The King sleeps,’ the ecclesiastical peer, who has already spoken, pronounces these words, which remove every obstacle, ‘We demand Louis XVI, whom God has given us for our King;’ immediately the chamber doors open and another scene begins. The grand master of the ceremonies leads the bishops to his Majesty, who is stretched upon a state bed: they salute him profoundly. The monarch is clothed in a long crimson waistcoat, trimmed with gold galloon, and, as well as the shirt, open at those places where he is to be anointed. Above the waistcoat he has a long robe of silver stuff, and upon his head a cap of black velvet, ornamented with a string of diamonds, a plume, and a white double aigrette. The ecclesiastical peer presents the holy water to the King, and repeats the following prayer: ‘Almighty and everlasting God, who hast raised Thy servant, Louis, to the regal dignity, grant him throughout his reign to seek the good of his subjects, and that he may never wander from the paths of truth and justice.’ This prayer ended, the two bishops take his Majesty, the one by the right arm, and the other by the left, and raising him from the bed, conduct him in pompous procession to the church through the covered gallery, chanting appropriate prayers.

“About seven, the King having reached the church, and everyone having taken his proper place, the Holy Ampulla soon arrived at the principal door. It was brought from the abbey of Saint Rémy by the grand prior, in a cover of cloth of gold, and mounted upon a white

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horse from the King's stable, covered with a housing of cloth of silver, richly embroidered, and led by the reins by two grooms of the state stable. The grand prior was under a canopy of similar materials, carried by four barons, called 'knights of the Holy Ampulla,' clad in white satin, with a mantle of black silk, and a white velvet scarf, trimmed with silver fringe which his Majesty had done them the honour to bestow upon them; they wore the knight's cross, suspended round the neck by a black ribbon. At the four corners of the canopy the peers named by the King as hostages of the Holy Ampulla were seen, each preceded by his esquire, with a standard, bearing on one side the arms of France, and on the other those of the peer himself. The hostages took an oath upon the Holy Gospels, and solemnly swore between the hands of the prior, in presence of the officers of the abbey bailiwick, that no injury should be done to the Holy Ampulla, for the preservation of which they promised to risk their lives if necessary; and at the same time, they made themselves 'pledges,' responsible sureties, and declared that they would remain hostages until the return of the Holy Ampulla. According to the form followed on such occasions, however, they required to be permitted to accompany it, 'for the greater safety and preservation of the aforesaid,' under the same responsibility; which was granted them. All these formalities are so superfluous that they become quite ridiculous. The Holy Ampulla, which is so conspicuous an article in the consecration of our Kings, is a sort of small bottle filled, as is said, with a miraculous balm, which never diminishes, and which served to anoint Clovis. It is pretended that it was sent from heaven and brought by a dove to Saint Rémy, who died about the year 533: it is treasured in the very tomb of the ancient archbishop, whose body remains entire in a shrine of the abbey bearing his name, and is enclosed in a silver-gilt reliquary, enriched with diamonds and gems of various colours.<sup>1</sup>

"The Archbishop of Rheims being apprised, by the Master of the Ceremonies, of the arrival of the Holy Ampulla, went immediately to receive it at the gate of the church: upon placing it in his hands, the grand prior, according to the form, addressed these words to him,

<sup>1</sup> This phial was afterwards broken to pieces upon the pavement of the abbey by the conventionary Ruhl, deputed for that purpose; the shrine and reliquaries, broken by his direction, were sent to La Monnaie. *Note by the Editors.*

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‘To you, my lord, I entrust this precious treasure sent from heaven to the great Saint Rémy for the consecration of Clovis and the Kings his successors; but I request you, according to ancient custom, to bind yourself to restore it into my hands after the consecration of our King Louis XVI.’ The archbishop, conformably with the custom, takes the required oath in these terms, ‘I receive this Holy Ampulla with reverence, and promise you, upon the faith of a prelate, to restore it into your hands at the conclusion of the ceremony of the consecration.’ Having thus said, the Cardinal de la Roche-Aymon took the marvellous phial, returned to the choir, and deposited it upon the altar. A few minutes afterwards he approached the King, to whom he administered the oath, called ‘the protection oath,’ for all the churches in subjection to the crown: a promise which his Majesty made sitting and covered. ‘I promise,’ said the King, ‘to prevent the commission of rapine and injustice of every description by persons of all ranks. I swear to apply myself sincerely, and with all my might, to the extermination of heretics, condemned and pointed out by the Church, from all countries subject to my government.’

“After this oath two ecclesiastical peers present the King to the assembly, and demand whether Louis XVI is approved of for the dignity of King of France. A respectful silence, say the books which describe the ceremony, announced the general consent.

“The Archbishop of Rheims presented the book of the Gospels to the King, upon which placing his hands, his Majesty took the oath to maintain and preserve the Orders of the Holy Ghost and Saint Louis, and always to wear the cross of the latter order attached to a flame-coloured silk ribbon; to enforce the edict against duels, without any regard to the intercessions of any princes or potentates in favour of the guilty. The former part of this oath is of very little importance, and the second is broken every day.

“When the King, for the second time, received the sword of Charlemagne, he deposited it in the hands of the Maréchal de Clermont-Tonnerre, officiating as constable, who held it point upwards during the ceremony of the consecration and coronation, as well as during the royal banquet. While the King was receiving and returning the sword of Charlemagne, several prayers were said. In one of them God was entreated that the holy monasteries might experience the King’s bounty; that his favours might be spread among the great of the king-



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dom; that the dew of heaven, and the fatness of earth, might furnish in his dominions an inexhaustible plenteousness of corn, wine, oil, and all kinds of fruit; so that, under his reign, the people might enjoy uninterrupted health, &c.

“When these prayers were finished, the officiating prelate opened the Holy Ampulla, and let a small quantity of oil drop from it, and this he diluted with some consecrated oil, called holy cream. The King prostrated himself before the altar upon a large square of violet-coloured velvet, embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lis, the old Archbishop Duke of Rheims being also prostrated on his right hand, and remained in that lowly posture until the conclusion of the litanies chanted by four bishops alternately with the choir. The following versicle occurs in those litanies:

“*Ut dominum Apostolicum et omnes gradus Ecclesiæ in sancta religione conservare digneris.* (That it may please Thee to keep the sovereign pontiff and all the orders of the Church in Thy holy religion.)

“At the end of the litanies the Archbishop of Rheims placed himself in his chair, and the King kneeling down before him, was anointed upon the crown of the head, the breast, between the two shoulders, upon the right shoulder, the left, the joint of the right arm, and upon that of the left arm; at the same time the prelate pronounced certain prayers, the substance of which was as follows: ‘May he humble the proud; may he be a lesson for the rich; may he be charitable towards the poor; and may he be a peacemaker among nations.’ A little further on these words occur among the prayers, ‘May he never abandon his rights over the kingdoms of the Saxons, Mercians, people of the north, and the Cimbri.’

“An anonymous author says, that by the word Cimbri is meant the kingdom of England, over which our Kings expressly reserve their indisputable rights, from the time of Louis VIII, upon whom it was conferred by the free election of the people who had driven out John Lackland.

“After the seven anointings the Archbishop of Rheims, assisted by the Bishops of Laon and Beauvais, laced up with gold laces the openings of the King’s shirt and waistcoat, and he, rising, was invested by the great chamberlain with the tunic, dalmatic, and royal mantle, lined and edged with ermine: these vestments are of violet velvet, embroidered with gold and fleurs-de-lis, and represent the dresses of sub-



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deacon, deacon, and priest: a symbol, doubtless, by which the clergy seek to prove their union with the royal power. The King placed himself upon his knees again before the officiating archbishop, who made the eighth unction upon the palm of the right hand, and the ninth and last upon that of the left; he afterwards placed a ring upon the fourth finger of the right hand, as a type of unlimited power, and of the intimate union thenceforward to reign between the King and his people. The archbishop then took the royal sceptre from off the altar, and put it into the King's right hand, and afterwards the hand of justice, which he put into the left hand. The sceptre is of gold, enamelled and ornamented with oriental pearls: it may be about six feet in height. Upon it is represented, in relief, Charlemagne, with the globe in his hand, seated in a chair of state, ornamented with two lions and two eagles. The hand of justice is a staff of massive gold, only one foot and a half in length, adorned with rubies and pearls, and terminated by a hand formed of ivory, or rather of the horn of a unicorn; and it has, at regular distances, three circles of leaves sparkling with pearls, garnets, and other precious stones.

“At length, however, we came to a period when the clergy ceased to arrogate to themselves the right of conferring his supremacy upon the King. The Keeper of the Seals of France, officiating as chancellor, ascended the altar, and placing himself by the side of the Gospels, turning his face towards the choir, summoned the peers to the coronation in the following words: ‘Monsieur, representing the Duke of Burgundy, come forward to this act, &c., &c.’ The peers, having approached the King, the Archbishop of Rheims took from the altar the crown of Charlemagne, which had been brought from Saint Denis, and placed it upon the King's head; immediately the ecclesiastical and lay peers raised their hands to support it there; a truly noble and expressive allegory, but which would be much more accurate if delegates from the people, also in the same emblematical spirit, sustained the crown. In one of the prayers at this part of the ceremony an oriental expression of great energy is made use of: ‘May the King have the strength of the rhinoceros; and may he, like a rushing wind, drive before him the nations of our enemies, even to the extremity of the earth.’ The crown of Charlemagne, which is preserved in the treasury of the abbey of Saint Denis, is of gold, and enriched with rubies and sapphires: it is lined with a crimson satin cap, embroidered with

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gold, and surmounted by a golden fleur-de-lis, covered with thirty-six oriental pearls.

“After these various ceremonies the Archbishop Duke of Rheims took the King by the right arm, and, followed by the peers and all the officers of the crown, led him to the throne raised upon a platform, where he seated him, reciting the enthroning prayers. In the first of these it is said, ‘As you see the clergy nearer than the rest of the faithful to the holy altars, so ought you to take care and maintain it in the most honourable place.’ On concluding the prayers prescribed for the occasion, the prelate took off his mitre, made a profound bow to the King, and kissed him, saying, ‘*Vivat Rex in æternum!*’ (May the King live for ever.) The other ecclesiastical and lay peers also kissed the King, one after the other, and as soon as they were returned to their places, the gates of the church were opened; the people rushed in, in a mass, and instantly made the roofs resound with shouts of ‘Long live the King!’ which were reëchoed by the crowd of persons engaged in the ceremony, who filled the enclosure of the choir like an amphitheatre; an irresistible impulse gave rise to a clapping of hands, which became general; the grandees, the court, the people, animated by the same enthusiasm, expressed it in the same manner.

“The Queen, exceedingly affected, could not withstand the impression it made upon her, and was obliged to withdraw for a short time. When she made her reappearance, she, in her turn, received a similar homage to that just offered by the nation to the King.

“While all resounded with exclamations of joy, the fowlers, according to a very ancient usage, set at liberty in the church a number of birds, which, in recovering their freedom, expressed the effusion of the monarch’s favours upon the people, and that men are never more truly free than under the reign of an enlightened, just, and beneficent prince.” (*Secret Correspondence of the Court of Louis XVI.*)

*Note XII, page 114.*

“The only passion ever shown by Louis XVI was for hunting; he was so much occupied by it, that when I went up into his private closets, at Versailles, after the 10th of August, I saw upon the staircase six frames, in which were seen statements of all his hunts, both when dauphin and when King. In them was detailed the number, kind, and quality of the game he had killed at each hunting party,

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with recapitulations for every month, every season, and every year of his reign.

“The interior of his private apartments was thus arranged: a saloon, ornamented with gilded mouldings, displayed the engravings which had been dedicated to him; drawings of the canals he had dug, with the model of that of Burgundy; and the plan of the cones and works of Cherbourg.

“The upper hall contained his collection of geographical charts, spheres, globes, and also his geographical cabinet. There were to be seen drawings of maps which he had begun, and some that he had finished. He had a clever method of washing them in. His geographical recollection was prodigious.

“Above was the turning and joinering room, furnished with ingenious instruments for working in wood. He inherited some from Louis XV, and he often busied himself, with Duret’s assistance, in keeping them clean and bright.

“Above was the library of books published during his reign. The prayer books and manuscript books of Anne of Brittany, Francis I, the latter Valois, Louis XIV, Louis XV, and the dauphin formed the great hereditary library of the castle. Louis XVI placed separately, in two apartments communicating with each other, the works of his own time. Among the most remarkable was a complete collection of Didot’s editions, printed on vellum, every volume of which was enclosed in a morocco case. There were several English works, among the rest the debates of the British parliament, in a great number of volumes in folio—(this is the “*Moniteur*” of England, a complete collection of which is so valuable and so scarce). By the side of this collection was to be seen a manuscript history of all the schemes for a descent upon that island, particularly that of Comtede Broglie, and other analogous plans.

“One of the presses of this cabinet was full of pasteboard boxes, containing papers relative to the House of Austria, with this ticket written in his own hand, ‘Secret papers of my family, respecting the House of Austria; papers of my family, respecting the Houses of Stuart and Hanover.’

“In an adjoining press were kept papers relative to Russia. The most refined wickedness produced the publication of satirical works against Catherine II, and against Paul I, which were sold in France



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under the names of histories. Louis XVI collected, and sealed up with his small seal, the scandalous anecdotes against Catherine II, as well as the works of Rhulière, of which he had a copy, to be certain that the secret life of that princess, which attracted the curiosity of her contemporaries, should not be laid open by his means.

“Above the King’s private library was a forge, two anvils, and a vast number of iron tools; various common locks, well made and perfect; some secret locks, and locks ornamented with gilt copper. It was there that the infamous Gamin, who afterwards accused the King of having tried to poison him, and was rewarded for his calumny with a pension of twelve thousand livres, taught him the art of lockmaking. Gamin, in spite of his vulgarity, had brought the King to suffer himself to be treated as an apprentice by his master in his workshop. This Gamin, who became our guide, by order of the department and municipality of Versailles, did not, however, complain of the King on the 20th December, 1792. He had been the confidant of that prince on an immense number of important commissions: the King had sent him the “Red Book,” from Paris, in a parcel; and the part which was concealed during the Constituent Assembly still remained so in 1793. Gamin hid it in a part of the château, inaccessible to everybody, where we found it. He took it from under the shelves of a secret press, before our eyes. This anecdote is a convincing proof that Louis XVI hoped to return to his château.

“In teaching Louis XVI his trade, Gamin had taken upon him the tone and authority of a master. ‘The King was good, forbearing, timid, inquisitive, and addicted to sleep,’ said Gamin to me; ‘he was fond of lockmaking to excess, and he concealed himself from the Queen and the court to file and forge with me. In order to convey his anvil and my own backwards and forwards, we were obliged to use a thousand stratagems, the history of which would never end.’

“Above the King’s and Gamin’s forges and anvils was an observatory, erected upon a platform covered with lead. There, seated in an arm-chair, and assisted by a telescope, the King observed all that was passing in the courtyards of Versailles, the Avenue de Paris, and the neighbouring gardens. He had taken a liking to Duret, one of the servants of the interior, who sharpened his tools, cleaned his anvils, pasted his maps, and adjusted eyeglasses to the King’s sight, who was myopic. This good Duret, and indeed all the servants of



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the interior, spoke of their master with regret and affection, and with tears in their eyes.

“The King was born weak and delicate; but, from the age of twenty-four, he possessed a robust constitution. Instances of his strength were often mentioned at court: he inherited it from his mother, who was of the House of Saxony, so celebrated for generations for its robustness.

“There were two men in Louis XVI—the man of knowledge and the man of will. The first of these possessed very extended and varied qualifications; the King knew the history of his own family, and of the first houses of France, perfectly. He composed the instructions for M. de La Pérouse’s voyage round the world, which the minister thought were drawn up by several members of the Academy of Sciences.

“His memory retained an infinite number of names and situations. He remembered quantities and numbers wonderfully. One day an account was presented to him, in which the minister had ranked among the expenses an item inserted in the account of the preceding year. ‘There is a double charge,’ said the King; ‘bring me last year’s account, and I will show it to you there.’

“When the King was perfectly master of the details of any matter, and when he saw justice violated, he was obdurate even to harshness. A crying injustice forced him out of his own disposition; then he would be obeyed instantly, in order to be sure that he was obeyed, and to prevent any negligence in that respect.

“But in important affairs of state the King of will and command was nowhere to be found. Louis XVI was, upon the throne, exactly what those weak temperaments whom nature has rendered incapable of an opinion are in society. In his pusillanimity he gave his confidence to a minister; and although amidst various counsels he often knew which was best, he never had the resolution to say, ‘I prefer the opinion of such a one.’ Herein originated the misfortunes of the State.” (Sou-lavie’s *Historical and Political Memoirs of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. ii.)

*Note XIII, page 154.*

Madame Campan, relating candidly and plainly what there is of truth in the anecdote since falsified by M. de Lauzun, has destroyed all the effect that his malignity could possibly intend. We shall give this anec-

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dote on which even he, in his folly, had no reason to pride himself much, and which his offended vanity has so strangely travestied.

“Madame de Guéménée came up to me, and said, in an undertone, laughing, ‘Are you very much attached to a certain white heron plume, which was in your helmet when you took leave? The Queen is dying for it; will you refuse it to her?’ I replied, that I should not dare to offer it to her, but that I should be most happy if she would condescend to receive it from Madame de Guéménée. I sent a messenger to Paris for it, and Madame de Guéménée gave it to her the next evening. She wore it on the day following, and when I made my appearance at her dinner, she asked me what I thought of her head-dress. I replied, that I liked it very much. ‘I never,’ said she, with infinite affability, ‘saw myself so becomingly dressed before.’ It certainly would have been better if she had not said anything about it, for the Duc de Coigny took notice both of the feather and the phrase; he asked whence the plume came: the Queen said, with some embarrassment, that I had brought it to Madame de Guéménée from my travels, and that she had given it to her. The Duc de Coigny spoke about it to Madame de Guéménée in the evening, with much asperity, and told her that nothing could be more ridiculous or indecorous than the footing I was on with the Queen; that to act the lover thus publicly was a thing unheard of; and that it was incredible that she should look as if she approved of it. What he said was not well received, and he began to think of contriving means to get me out of the way.”

Now, if Madame Campan’s version be compared with that we have just read, what will be the result? that M. de Lauzun himself offered the heron’s plume, and was not asked for it; that it was worn out of mere condescension, and that, in his silly presumption, he dared to take that for a proof of partiality, which was mere politeness. M. de Lauzun cannot conceal his presumptuous hopes, but his *Memoirs* do not disclose the speedy chastisement they met with. The humiliation he must have felt when the Queen banished him from her presence for ever explains the resentment of a man generally successful in his intrigues and anxious to indulge his self-love, even at the expense of honour and truth.

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*Note XIV, page 159.*

*Letter to a Lady*

LACHSENBURG, 4th August, 1787.

MADAME, I do not think that it is amongst the duties of a monarch to grant places to one of his subjects merely because he is a gentleman. That, however, is the inference from the request you have made to me. Your late husband was, you say, a distinguished general, a gentleman of good family; and thence you conclude that my kindness to your family can do no less than give a company of foot to your second son, lately returned from his travels.

Madame, a man may be the son of a general, and yet have no talent for command. A man may be of a good family, and yet possess no other merit than that which he owes to chance, the name of gentleman.

I know your son, and I know what makes the soldier; and this two-fold knowledge convinces me that your son has not the disposition of a warrior, and that he is too full of his birth to leave the country a hope of his ever rendering it any important service.

What you are to be pitied for, madame, is that your son is not fit either for an officer, a statesman, or a priest; in a word, that he is nothing more than a gentleman, in the most extended acceptation of the word.

You may be thankful to that destiny, which, in refusing talents to your son, has taken care to put him in possession of great wealth, which will sufficiently compensate him for other deficiencies, and enable him, at the same time, to dispense with any favour from me.

I hope you will be impartial enough to feel the reasons which prompt me to refuse your request. It may be disagreeable to you, but I consider it necessary. Farewell, madame. Your sincere well-wisher,

JOSEPH.

*Letter to Pope Pius VI*

VIENNA, July, 1784.

MOST HOLY FATHER, The funds of the clergy of my dominions are not destined, as has been boldly said at Rome, to expire with my reign, but rather to become a relief to my people; and as their continuation, as well as the displeasure which has burst forth upon this subject, are within the jurisdiction of history, posterity will be masters of the mat-

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ter without our coöperation. This, then, will be a monument of my time, and I hope not the only one.

I have suppressed the superfluous convents, and the still more superfluous societies: their revenues serve to support curates and to ameliorate the primary institutions; but amidst all the confidence in matters of account, which I am obliged to place in persons employed by the State, the funds of the latter have, with me, absolutely nothing in common with those of the Church. An action should be judged of only by its intention, and the results of this action can only be appreciated by their success, which will not be known for some years.

I see, however, that logic is not the same at Rome as it is in my dominions; and hence arises this want of harmony between Italy and the Empire.

If your Holiness had taken the charitable care to inform yourself, at the proper source, of what was passing in my territories, many things would not have happened; but there are people at Rome who, as it appears to me, would have darkness spread itself more and more over our poor globe.

You have now the brief account of the causes which have compelled my arrangements; I hope you will excuse the conciseness of my letter, on consideration that I have neither the time nor the talent necessary for discussing so vast a theme in the manner used in a Roman "museum."

I pray God still long to preserve you to His Church, and to send one of His angels before you to prepare for you the ways of heaven. Your most obedient son in Jesus Christ,

JOSEPH.

*Letter to a Lady*

VIENNA, *September*, 1787.

MADAME, You know my disposition: you are not ignorant that the society of ladies is to me a mere recreation, and that I have never sacrificed my principles to the fair sex. I pay but little attention to recommendations, and I only take them into consideration when the person in whose behalf I may be solicited possesses real merit.

Two of your sons are already loaded with favours. The eldest, who is not yet twenty, is chief of a squadron in my army, and the younger has obtained a prebend at Cologne, from the Elector, my brother.



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What would you have more? Would you have the first a general, and the second a bishop?

In France you may see colonels in leading strings; and in Spain the royal princes command armies even at eighteen; hence Prince Stahremberg forced them to retreat so often, that they were never able, all the rest of their lives, to comprehend any other manœuvre.

It is necessary to be sincere at court, and severe in the field, stoical without obduracy, magnanimous without weakness, and to gain the esteem of our enemies by the justice of our actions; and this, madame, is what I aim at.

JOSEPH.

(Extract from the unedited letters from Joseph II, published at Paris, by Persan, 1822.)

*Note XV, page 181.*

“Maurepas (Jean-Frédéric-Phélypeaux, Comte de) sprung from a family originally of Blois, and acknowledged noble from 1399, was the son of Jérôme, Minister and Secretary of State, and grandson of Chancellor de Pontchartrain, whose father and grandfather were also in administration; so that these places remained in the same family one hundred and seventy-one years (from 1610 to 1781). The Comte de Maurepas, who was born in 1701, was a Knight of Malta before he was of age. At fourteen he was appointed Secretary of State, in the room of his father, who had just resigned. The Marquis de la Vrillière was deputed to execute the office, and to train up the young minister, who was related to him, and shortly afterwards became his son-in-law, to the business of his post. The Comte de Maurepas lost his father-in-law in 1725, and then, and not till then, began his administration, which extended over several large provinces, over Paris, the court, and the navy. He was at that time but twenty-four, and thus early did he betray the levity, carelessness, and frivolity of disposition, which continued uncorrected by either the lessons of disgrace or the maturity of age throughout the whole course of a conspicuous career, which nature and fortune combined to prolong to a very advanced period. He is thus described by one of his contemporaries: ‘Superficial and incapable of steady and profound application, but blest with a degree of intelligence and a quickness of perception, which in an instant unravelled the most complicated knot of any affair, his experience and address made amends

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in council for his want of study and reflection. He was prepossessing and easy, supple and insinuating, flexible, fertile in stratagems for attack, resources for defence, feints to elude, evasions, repartees to laugh down serious opposition, and expedients for retrieving false steps, and surmounting difficulties: he seized, with the eye of a lynx, the weak points, or the singularities of men; was master of the art of imperceptibly drawing them into his snare, or leading them into his views, and of the still more formidable talent of ridiculing everything, even merit, when he wished to depreciate it: finally, the art of enlivening and simplifying the labours of the cabinet made M. de Maurepas one of the most seductive of ministers.

“He was looked upon as a great statesman, merely because he had written four malicious verses against a hated favourite. ‘If,’ says Marmontel, ‘to teach a young prince how to conduct business lightly and adroitly, to sport with men and things, to make reigning an amusement, had been all that was requisite, Maurepas was certainly the man for the purpose.’ Perhaps it was hoped that age and misfortune had given him greater solidity, constancy, and energy of character; but naturally weak, indolent, and selfish, fond of his comforts, and of rest, desirous that his old age should be honoured and quiet, carefully avoiding everything that could sadden his evening meal, or disturb his slumbers, scarcely believing in the self-denying virtues, and considering pure public spirit as mere ostentation or chimera; careless of any conspicuous merit in his administration, making the art of governing consist in conducting all things quietly, and ever consulting considerations rather than principles, Maurepas was, in his old age, just what he had been in his youth, an agreeable man, intent on his own advantage, and a courtly minister.” (*Biographie Universelle*, vol. xxvii.)

*Note XVI, page 205.*

“Marie Antoinette could not be accused of having, when on the throne, falsified the favourable idea formed of her virtues while she lived in a less elevated rank. She continued to manifest, in the interior of her court, the same aversion to etiquette. She gave up neither her walks, nor her visits to Paris. Excepting on days of ceremony, she liked to dress in the plainest manner, but the air of dignity, for which she was remarkable, rendered it easy to guess her rank.

“This plainness began to be warmly censured, at first among the

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courtiers, and afterwards throughout the rest of the kingdom: and, through one of those inconsistencies, more common in France than elsewhere, all the while the Queen was blamed, she was imitated to a folly. There was not a woman but would have the same undress, the same cap, and the same feathers, as she had been seen to wear. They crowded to one Madame Bertin, her milliner; there was an absolute revolution in the dress of our ladies, which gave a kind of consequence to that woman. Long trains, and all those shapes which confer a certain nobleness upon dress, were discarded; and, at last, a duchess could not be distinguished from an actress.

“The men caught the mania; the upper classes had long before given up feathers, tufts of ribbon, and laced hats, to their lackeys. They now got rid of red heels and embroidery, and were pleased to walk about our streets in plain cloth, short thick shoes, and with knotty cudgels in their hands.

“Many got into degrading scrapes in consequence of this metamorphosis. Mixed with the mob, and bearing no mark to distinguish them from the common herd, it so happened that some of the lowest classes got into quarrels with them, and in conflict with the rabble, the man of rank had not always the superiority. It was thus that the second order destroyed the respect which had always been paid to it, and hastened that reign of equality which proved so detrimental to them.

“These changes produced a still more serious inconvenience, in their powerful influence over morals; for, on the one hand, there was too strong a taste for the manners and habits of the common people, as well as for those democratical maxims which tend to bring all to a level, and, on the other, the common people were habituated to contempt, insubordination, and insolence. This is a forcible lesson for those who reign. They too often forget that they do nothing, if they know not the temper of the people they govern perfectly well, and that it sometimes is with customs adopted from foreigners as it is with certain plants, which, by mere change of climate, become poisonous.” (*History of Marie Antoinette*, by Montjoie.)

*Note XVII, page 207.*

“The Queen showed herself as little the slave of ceremony in her choice of amusements; theatrical performances took place in her inner apartments: she condescended to take characters, and those characters were



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not always of the most dignified description; she also played in comic operas. This sort of amusement was, like her plainness in dress, blamed and imitated; all classes of society imbibed a taste for theatrical representations; there was not a man of rank, a financier, nor even a citizen in easy circumstances, who would be without his theatre, or who would not copy the behaviour of actors while in it. Formerly a private gentleman would have been disgraced if suspected of metamorphosing himself into an actor, even in his own circle. The Queen having, by her example, put an end to this salutary prejudice, the very head of the magistracy, unmindful of the dignity of his place, got by heart the lowest comic parts, and performed them.

“The mania, as it became general, gradually filled up the chasm which had always separated actors from the other classes of society; they were associated with more freely, and public morals gained but little by the connection.

“The Queen got through the characters she assumed indifferently enough; she could not be ignorant of this, as her performances evidently excited little pleasure. Indeed, one day, while she was thus exhibiting herself, somebody ventured to say, by no means inaudibly, ‘Well, this is playing royally ill.’ The lesson was thrown away upon her, for never did she sacrifice to the opinion of another that which she thought indifferent in itself, or not absolutely forbidden to her.

“Louis XIV had a similar taste; he danced upon the stage; but he had shown, by brilliant actions, that he knew how to enforce respect; and, besides, he unhesitatingly gave up the amusement in question from the moment he heard those beautiful lines in which Racine pointed out how very unworthy of him such pastimes were.

“The Queen was not equally tractable. When she was told that, by her extreme plainness in dress, the nature of her amusements, and her dislike of that splendour which ought always to attend a queen, she gave herself an appearance of levity, which was misinterpreted by a portion of the public, she replied with Madame de Maintenon, ‘I am upon the stage, and, of course, I shall be either hissed or applauded.’” (*History of Marie Antoinette*, by Montjoie.)

*Note XVIII, page 210.*

“Franklin was born at Boston, in New England, on the 17th of January, 1706. His father was a tallow-chandler, and he himself was brought



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up to that trade. At the age of fourteen, burning with a thirst for information, he left the paternal roof for Philadelphia, and succeeded in procuring admission into the only printing-house then in that place, or indeed in the whole of North America. There he lived for a twelve-month upon bread and water, in order to enable himself to buy those books which he required for studying the sciences. His progress, and his discoveries, particularly in natural philosophy, procured him a high reputation. It is known that to him we are indebted for the invention of lightning-rods, and for the power of fearlessly attracting and directing the fire of heaven. Study did not occasion him to neglect his fortune. For a long time he got his livelihood by printing and bookselling. Esteemed by his fellow-citizens, he became postmaster-general for North America, a lucrative place. He still held it when he appeared in February, 1766, before the English House of Commons, on the question as to revoking the stamp duty. He firmly maintained the right of the British Colonies, as being unrepresented in the Parliament of England, to tax themselves." (*Historical Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XVI*, vol. iv.)

In the same work, we afterwards find the following particulars:

"Messrs. Deane and Franklin, deputies from the insurgents in 1777, lived at Paris, without retinue, without splendour, and without ostentation; they showed a citizen-like plainness. Doctor Franklin was very much sought after, and constantly entertained, not only by his scientific brethren, but by all who could persuade him to visit them; for he did not easily suffer himself to be drawn out, and lived in a state of privacy, which was supposed to have been enjoined him by his government. He dressed himself in the very plainest manner. His physiognomy was fine, and he constantly wore spectacles: he had but little hair, and always wore a fur cap, no powder, yet an air of cleanliness, linen perfectly white, and a brown coat formed the whole outward ornament of his person. His only weapon was a stick which he carried in his hand.

"Powerfully solicited by Silas Deane and Franklin, the court of France began to take an interest in insurgent America. Beaumarchais, who intrigued with the Comte de Maurepas, knew how to profit by circumstances. He was privately authorised to trade in arms with the English colonies. They were partly indebted for the unexpected advantage of the warlike stores necessary for their earliest campaigns to the

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influence and activity of that agent. Beaumarchais gained immense sums by selling, at a dear rate, his zeal and services, and laughed at the accusation, whether well or ill founded, of having sold worn-out arms, and the worst stores of all kinds.

“Mr. Deane, tired out by the delays, and even excuses of M. de Sartine, then Minister of the Marine, wrote to him that unless within forty-eight hours he made up his mind to get the treaty of alliance between France and North America signed, he would negotiate with England for a reconciliation. He adopted this hasty and irregular course without the participation of his colleague. The moment Doctor Franklin heard of it he thought all was lost. ‘You have offended the court of France, and ruined America,’ exclaimed the philosopher. ‘Be easy until we get an answer,’ replied the negotiator. ‘An answer! we shall be thrown into the Bastille.’ ‘That remains to be seen.’

“After the lapse of a few hours M. de Sartine’s chief secretary made his appearance. ‘You are requested, gentlemen, to hold yourselves in readiness for an interview at midnight; you will be called for.’

“‘At midnight!’ cries Doctor Franklin, the moment the secretary is gone; ‘my prediction is verified: Mr. Deane, you have ruined all.’

“They were, of course, called upon at the appointed hour. The American envoys got into a carriage, and reached a country house five leagues from Paris, where M. de Sartine chose to receive them, the better to hide this step under the veil of mystery. They were introduced to the minister, and the declaration, so imperiously demanded by Mr. Deane, was instantly signed.

“The American deputies returned to Paris in triumph, and Franklin confessed, that in politics patience was not always the only thing to be relied on.

“When the loss sustained by the United States of America was made known in France on the 11th of June, 1790, Mirabeau ascended the tribune of the National Assembly, and spoke thus:

“‘Franklin is dead; he is returned to the bosom of the Deity. The sage, for whom the two worlds contend, the man claimed both by the history of science and that of empires, doubtless held a high rank among the human species. Long enough have political bodies notified the deaths of those, great only in their funeral eulogies; long enough has the etiquette of courts proclaimed mourning for losses unregretted;

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nations should mourn for their benefactors alone. Congress has ordered throughout the confederate states a two months' mourning for the death of Franklin. Would it not be worthy of us, gentlemen, to join in this religious act, to contribute to the respect paid in the face of the universe to the rights of man, and, at the same time, to the philosopher who has most contributed to spread the assertion of them all over the earth? The ancients would have raised altars to that powerful genius, who, for the good of mortals, grasping in his mind both heaven and earth, learned how to subdue the thunder of the one, and the tyrants of the other.'

"The National Assembly unanimously decreed a public mourning for three days.

"The municipality of Paris, desirous to do marked homage to the memory of a man who was fired by the genius of science and the love of liberty, had his funeral oration pronounced by the Abbé Fauchet, president of the council general of the commune, in the immense and superb rotunda of the corn-market, in the midst of which a funeral trophy was raised. The whole interior of the rotunda was lined with black; a candelabra attached to each pillar, a row of lamps above the cornice, and an amphitheatre all round the building, filled with auditors in mourning, presented a sight equally majestic and solemn. The National Assembly attended by deputation."

*Note XIX, pages 226, 229.*

"The King (of Naples), having attained his eighteenth year, married Maria Caroline of Austria, daughter of the illustrious Maria Theresa (1768). His marriage held out hopes to the Neapolitan nation that Austria would thenceforward no longer aim at the throne of Naples, and would long leave them at rest. But from that moment the influence of the cabinet of Madrid ceased. England and Austria had combined their interests; and the former, by her commerce, and the latter, by alliances, had already assumed the most powerful control over the affairs of Italy. Austria did not neglect the ready means offered by fortune of securing her own influence over the court of Naples. It was stipulated, in the contract of marriage between Ferdinand and Caroline, that after the birth of their first son, the young queen should be admitted into the council, form a member of it, and even have a deliberate voice there; a privilege which she did not fail to claim as soon



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as she was entitled to it. It was then, though too late, that Tanucci saw the error he had committed, in not opposing such a clause with all his strength. He endeavoured, however, to elude it; but the Queen, equally penetrating and ambitious, and daily gaining an ascendancy over her husband, discovered the cause of the obstacles thrown in the way of her views by the improvident minister, and determined to get rid of him. Tanucci was very soon turned out of office, mortified even to disgust, and tortured with regret (1777). Like so many others who preceded him in the most perilous of all careers, he withdrew to end those days which he had, however, spent honourably, in retreat. Though the court was unthankful, the people were grateful, and even to this day his memory is held in veneration. He was the Sully, or the Colbert of the country.

“The Queen had the address to select an easy man, who would lend himself to her views. The Marquis de Sambuca was appointed to succeed the fallen minister; and thus, according to the not uncommon course, mediocrity filled the place vacated by merit. From this moment the Queen’s power and influence were firmly established.

“Never did any kingdom stand more in need of a naval force than did that of Naples. Even if it were not of consequence to her for the protection of commerce, and for securing the communication between the two Sicilies, it certainly is indispensable, both to repress the audacity of the African pirates, and to prevent those barbarians from attacking the security and quiet of the Neapolitan shores. The necessity of either forming a new marine force, or improving that already in existence, was obvious. The first step was to find out a skilful naval tactician for the office of minister of marine; but the government was unwilling to take one either from Spain or France. The chevalier Aëton had served some time in the navy, but he had experienced mortifications in the service, and had left it. He was proposed to the Queen, and was accepted.

“This officer, at that time, commanded the naval force of the Duke of Tuscany. He had acquired some reputation in various expeditions against the people of Barbary, and especially in an enterprise against the Algerines, undertaken by the Spaniards, Neapolitans, and Tuscans, in conjunction. Still young, ambitious, but without genius, and knowing little more than navigation, he was gifted, by way of compensation, with great docility and much adroitness: and, by seconding



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the designs of the Queen, to whom he owed his good fortune, he was not long in entering upon what is called a brilliant career.

“Caroline, who was born ambitious, had the same spirit of innovation as her brother Joseph, without possessing either his talents or philosophy. She wanted his masculine perseverance and firmness of disposition. She first ordered that certain roads, requisite for internal commerce, should be opened, and in order to defray the expenses of doing so she created a tax, which was annually to bring in three hundred thousand ducats : but these useful works were suspended almost as soon as begun: the produce of the new tax was diverted to other purposes, and although it was to have been only temporary, the receipt of it was continued.

“However, Acton was entrusted with the administration of the navy. A regeneration, or rather a new creation of the whole Neapolitan marine, was expected from him; and he began with a most grievous error. The great object of a navy at Naples should be the protection of trade, which mainly consists in exportation of the produce of the country, against the Barbary powers. Acton was wholly intent upon giving ships of the line, and frigates, to a state which principally needed small vessels that draw little water, and are capable of following the pirates wherever they may retreat, into creeks and the most confined harbours. This mistake cost the nation considerable sums, and the small vessels which it possessed already, and which, armed as corsairs, had become truly formidable to the African pirates, were sacrificed with singular imprudence.

“In spite of the ill-success of these innovations, alterations, and what were termed improvements, were always going on in the court of Naples; and a reform in the military department began to be thought of. According to the ordinances of Charles III, the army was not to consist of fewer than thirty thousand men; but, as almost always happens in time of peace, when government does not keep a watchful eye upon the army, the number of effective soldiers did not exceed half the prescribed number—that is to say, fifteen thousand men. The chevalier Acton, having procured for himself the administration of the army, as well as that of the navy, increased the number of soldiers, but made no change in the prevailing ruinous system, and took no pains to introduce discipline and good order among the troops.

“But before we retrace the minister Acton’s methods of reorganis-











